NATION

Farmers' body SKM says it will resume agitation

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Modi meets economists ahead of Budget, seeks suggestions

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

With late goal fit for a king, England reaches Euro final

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 12 JULY 2024 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 5 MUHARRAM, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 170 | Pages: 8

WE ARE HIRING

REPORTERS
WEB-EDITOR
DESIGNER

Journalism degree preferred but not essential.

Reporter: 4-6 years experience.

Designer and web-editor: 2-4 years experience.

SEND YOUR CV TO:

hr.salarnews@gmail.com
anushreeirwin@gmail.com

NATO promises Ukraine $43B aid, 'membership'

The summit was held amid worries over Russia, China ties

WASHINGTON, 11 JULY

NATO leaders have pledged to provide Ukraine with at least $43bn in military aid within the next year to bolster its defences against Russia and formally declared Kyiv on an "irreversible path" to membership in the Western military alliance.

The NATO summit was held amid concerns about growing support from China and North Korea for the Russian invasion. The pledges, included in a final communiqué following a NATO summit in Washington, DC, on Thursday, came as the alliance's members also announced individual and joint steps to boost Ukraine's and Europe's security. This includes the United States, Netherlands and Denmark announcing that the first NATO-provided F-16 fighter jets would be in the hands of Ukrainian military pilots by this summer. The US also said it will be deploying longer-range missiles in Germany in 2026, a major step aimed at countering what the allies say is Russia's growing threat to Europe.

President Joe Biden speaks during the opening session of the NATO Summit **PHOTO: AP/PTI**

The move will send Germany the most potent US weapons to be based on the European continent since the Cold War. It would have been banned under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty signed by the US and the Soviet Union in 1987, but that collapsed in 2019.

China vs NATO

China accused NATO on Thursday of seeking security at the expense of others and told the alliance not to bring the same "chaos" to Asia.

The statement by Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian came a day after NATO labelled China a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine. "NATO hyping up China's responsibility on the Ukraine issue is unreasonable and has sinister motives," spokesperson Lin Jian said at a daily briefing. He maintained that China has a fair and objective stance on the Ukraine issue.

China has broken with the United States and its European allies over the war in Ukraine, refusing to condemn Russia's invasion.

Lin said that China's trade with Russia is legitimate and reasonable and based on World Trade Organization rules. *—Agencies*

>>>More on Pages 5 & 6

NABBED IN PATNA

CBI arrests 'Rocky', alleged mastermind of NEET-UG leak

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The CBI on Thursday arrested one of the alleged kingpins in the NEET-UG paper leak case who was on the run ever since the crackdown on irregularities in the entrance exam began, officials said.

Rockey alias Rakesh Ranjan, who hails from Nalanda, and is said to be a relative of mastermind Sanjeev Mukhia, was nabbed by the agency from outskirts of Patna, they said.

The agency produced him before a special court in Patna which has remanded him to 10 days of CBI custody, they said. The CBI conducted searches at three locations in Patna and nearby areas and one in Kolkata after his arrest, they said. CBI had conducted searches at 15 locations in Bihar and Jharkhand gathering incriminating evidence in the case, they said.

The agency had earlier arrested the principal and vice principal of Jharkhand's Hazaribagh-based Oasis school and two persons who allegedly lent premises to NEET candidates where burnt question papers were recovered.

The CBI has registered six FIRs in the matter so far. The FIR from Bihar pertains to paper leaks, while the remaining, from Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

UG is conducted by the National Testing Agency for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions. This year, the exam was conducted on 5 May at 4,750 centres, including 14 abroad. *—PTI*

Rakesh Ranjan **PHOTO: PTI**

SC postpones hearing on re-test to 18 July

The Supreme Court on Thursday adjourned till 18 July the hearing of a clutch of petitions seeking cancellation, re-test and probe into alleged malpractices in the conduct of NEET-UG 2024 as the responses of the Centre and NTA were yet to be received by some parties. It noted that separate affidavits filed on Wednesday by the Centre and NTA, which conducts the test, have not been received by counsel for some of the petitioners. Centre said data analytics of the results of NEET-UG 2024 was conducted by IIT Madras which found there was neither any indication of "mass malpractice".

Sri Lanka arrests 13 more Indian fishermen

CHENNAI, 11 JULY

As many as 13 Tamil Nadu fishermen were arrested by Sri Lanka on Thursday and their three boats were also seized, Chief Minister MK Stalin conveyed to the Centre and urged swift action to get the fishers and their boats released. Stalin, writing to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, referred to the latest incident of arrest, said that fishermen face an unprecedented crisis. "Currently, the Sri Lankan authorities have detained 173 fishing boats and 80 fishermen." These detentions have severely impacted their livelihoods and caused immense distress to their families, the CM said. "In light of the above, I request that a strong and coordinated effort may be made by the Ministry of External Affairs to address this matter urgently. I also request that appropriate diplomatic channels may be activated to ensure the immediate release of all the fishermen and their fishing boats." *—PTI*

VIZHINJAM'S 1ST MOTHERSHIP

A container ship named 'San Fernando' arrived from China at Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited in Kerala on Thursday, marking the first-ever arrival of such a vessel at India's largest transhipment port **PHOTO: PTI**

>>>More on Page 4

Industry body 'concerned' over new gig workers' bill

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Industry body IAMAI has urged Karanataka government to put on "hold" legislative process around its draft bill on platform-based gig workers to give sufficient time for thorough consultations.

It flagged several "concerns" that can potentially "negatively impact" ease of business in the state.

Among the various pain points, The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) has highlighted the possibility of dual levy coming into play on social security, and rued lack of clarity on how the proposed welfare fee contribution from aggregators to support social security of gig workers will be utilised.

Other concerns in the draft bill pertain to "overly harsh" clauses for offences, "unrealistic expectations and obligations from aggregators" and "significant legal complexities" on account of planned inclusion of gig workers' dispute redressal under the Industrial Disputes Act.

IAMAI also expressed worries over what it claimed is "ambiguity in calculation of welfare fee contribution", and lamented that onerous data sharing requirements would pose significant challenges to the business operations of aggregators.

IAMAI contended that the gig economy is an evolving sector, and any new regulations will have far-reaching ramifications for workers, platforms and the larger ecosystem. *—PTI*

9-yr-old girl gangraped, by 3 minor in Andhra

NANDYAL, 11 JULY

A nine-year-old girl in Andhra Pradesh's Nandyal district was gangraped and murdered allegedly by three school seniors, all minors. Later, they dumped her body in a canal to destroy evidence, the police said. Two of the accused are 15 years old, while the other one is 12 years old, the official said. Nandyal district superintendent of police K Raghuveera Reddy said the girl, who was playing in a park on Sunday, was gangraped by the boys and then pushed into Mucchumarri Lift Irrigation canal on Sunday at around 5pm.

They were all from Mucchumarri village and everybody knew each other. Police received a missing complaint from the girl's parents, prompting them to launch a search for her but are yet to find her body. They are also interrogating the boys. According to the SP, a National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team arrived on Thursday to search for the body. *—PTI*

CISF, RPF, BSF to reserve 10% quota for ex-Agniveers

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The Chiefs of CISF, RPF and the BSF on Thursday said 10 per cent posts of constables will be reserved in their respective forces for former Agniveers in line with a decision by the Union Home Ministry.

The remarks by CISF Director General Nina Singh and her BSF counterpart Nitin Agrawal came amid fresh spotlight on the Agnipath recruitment scheme for short-term induction of personnel in the Army, Navy and the Air Force. In June 2022, the government rolled out the Agnipath recruitment scheme with an aim to bring down the age profile of the three services. Various central government agencies and departments have already announced plans to recruit former Agniveers. "They got four years of experience. They are fully disciplined and trained personnel. After training, they will be deployed along the border," he said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Pvt firms bag 7 defence projects

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

India's premier Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has awarded seven new projects to private entities to develop key military assets including underwater launched unmanned aerial vehicle and long-range remotely operated systems.

The projects were cleared under the defence ministry's Technology Development Fund scheme to boost domestic defence manufacturing.

The project for underwater-launched unmanned aerial vehicles is aimed at developing versatile marine battlefield accessories which can be deployed in multiple combat roles, officials said.

The objective is part of a larger framework of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), they said.

The project has been awarded to Sagar Defence Engineering Pvt Ltd, Pune, according to the defence ministry. The other projects are development of ice detection sensor for aircraft, manufacturing of radar signal processor, long-range remotely-operated vehicles for detection and neutralisation of underwater objects. The long-range remotely-operated vehicles will be dual-use systems that will enable detection, classification, localisation and neutralisation of underwater objects while keeping the key assets away from the suspected operational area, the ministry said. The work has been awarded to a start-up, IROV Technologies Pvt Ltd, Kochi. *—PTI*

CONG BLAMES RSS

DU to teach Manusmriti to law students

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

A proposal to teach Manusmriti (Laws of Manu) to Delhi University's LLB students is slated to be discussed in a meeting of its Academic Council on Friday, a move which has drawn criticism from a section of teachers.

The Faculty of Law has sought approval from the highest decision-making body of Delhi University (DU) to revise the syllabus of its first and third-year students to teach them 'Manusmriti'. The changes in the syllabus of the jurisprudence paper pertain to semesters one and six of LLB. According to the revisions, two readings on Manusmriti- Manusmriti with the Manubhasya of Medhatithi by GN Jha and Commentary of Manusmriti- Smritichandrika by T Kristnasawmi Iyer- are proposed to be introduced for the students. The decision to suggest the revisions was unanimously approved by a Committee headed by its dean Anju Vali Tikoo.

Law faculty has sought approval from Delhi University **PHOTO: PTI**

Objecting to the move, the Left-backed Social Democratic Teachers Front (SDTF) has written to DU Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh stating that the manuscript propagates a "regressive" outlook towards the rights of women and the marginalised communities and that it is against a "progressive education system".

SDTF General Secretary SS Barwal and chairperson SK Sagar said recommending Manusmriti to students as a suggested reading "is highly objectionable as this text is adverse to the progress and education of women". The SDTF demanded that the proposal be immediately withdrawn and it should not be approved in the Academic Council's meeting. Congress attacked the Centre over a proposal to teach 'Manusmriti' to Delhi University's LLB students, alleging that this is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "salami tactics" to bring fulfilment to the decades-long attempt by the RSS to "assault" the Constitution. "In our Constitution, there is no mention of the unique constitutional development in ancient Bharat," said. *—PTI*

Amid rising cases, K'taka announces free dengue testing, treatment centres

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

Karnataka said that all testing and treatment will be provided free for Dengue fever cases at all healthcare centres under the Department of Health and Family Welfare.

Setting up of 'Dengue war room' both at state and district level, constituting district level task force, identification of hotspots, activation of fever clinics, distribution of mosquito repellents, are among the instructions given by the department in a circular, to district administrations for strict compliance.

As per health department data, State till Wednesday recorded 7,840 dengue positive cases since January this year, with areas coming under the city civic body, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) accounting for the largest at 2,292 .

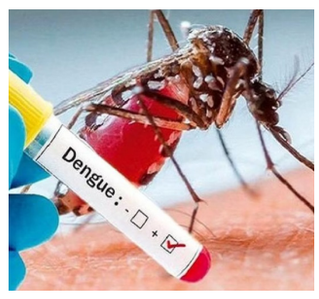


PHOTO: PTI

On Wednesday, the State reported 293 fresh dengue infection cases, including 118 in BBMP areas.

"All testing and treatment facilities (including ICU if needed) shall be provided free of cost for all Dengue fever cases (irrespective of BPL/ APL status of patient) in all health care facilities which are under Department of Health & Family Welfare," the circular said. Noting that all the houses should be covered for source reduction once in a fortnight through ASHA and health staff, it said, the health staff can be supplemented by volunteers, especially in urban areas. The volunteers are to be engaged by Urban Local Bodies at Rs 200 per day. *—PTI*

- State till Wednesday recorded 7,840 dengue positive cases since January this year, with areas coming under the city civic body, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) accounting for the largest at 2,292 .

>>>More on Page 2

After 7K cases, State asks BBMP to identify dengue hotspots

BBMP told to set up more fever clinics, fumigate affected areas

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

After announcing free testing and treatment for dengue fever cases at healthcare centres under the Department of Health, the State government asked district administrations and BBMP to identify hotspots (an area with a radius of about 100M within which two or more dengue positive cases have been reported).

The Health Department also said efforts should be to reduce the number of hotspots through intensification of source reduction activity in such areas, through mass spraying of larvicide in outdoor areas where water stagnation points are noticed, and fogging in indoors.

It said, the campaign for source reduction with appropriate IEC (Information,Education and Communication) on dengue fever prevention and treatment would be undertaken with active involvement of elected representatives, citizens and other allied departments in the forenoon on every Friday (or any other day as decided by the District Task Force) wherein the public would be motivated to take up cleanliness drive inside and outside of their houses as well as empty and scrub clean water storage containers.

Ensure activation of fever clinics in such areas, it said, and asked authorities to ensure distribution of mosquito repellent neem oil or suitable alternatives in such areas for external application on exposed body parts like hands, legs, neck, face, etc to the poor households.

It also called for monitoring positive cases daily for 14 days from onset of symptoms, and to educate them about early warning signs of the mild dengue disease progressing to moderate/severe stage.

A minimum of five beds in taluk hospitals and 8-10 beds in district hospitals shall be earmarked for Dengue fever cases, it said.

However, these beds could be utilised for other patients in case they are not fully used for dengue patients.

Testing kits, essential drugs and IV fluids for treatment and management of dengue cases shall be kept well stocked in all Health care facilities, the circular further said, adding that it shall be ensured that platelets, fresh frozen plasma and other blood components are available in sufficient quantity in both public and private blood banks. *—PTI*

Janata Party members wear mosquito nets to protest against BBMP officials in front of BBMP head office on Thursday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Cong is not bothered about dengue, says Vijayendra

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

Karnataka BJP President BY Vijayendra on Thursday attacked the State government over the Dengue cases in the State and said that the government is not "bothered", adding that BJP will raise the in Assembly.

"State govt is not at all bothered. Even the concerned minister is sitting in Bengaluru and not touring the State. Day by day dengue cases and deaths are increasing. In my constituency, a nine-month-old baby passed away due to dengue," Vijayendra said. He further attacked Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and said that he was only interested in real estate.

"Congress is least bothered about development of the State. Development works have come to a standstill in the State. Now, Shivakumar is talking about renaming Ramanagara district to Bengaluru South. God knows what the agenda behind this decision is. Entire Karnataka knows that Shivakumar is interested only in real estate. I think there is a real estate agenda behind this thinking. It is a political gimmick," he said. *—ANI*

A vendor selling mosquito nets at Madhava Park, Jayanagar, in Bengaluru on Thursday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Valmiki scamsters honey-trapped officials: Sriramulu

PHOTO: PTI

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

Senior BJP leader B Sriramulu on Thursday alleged that the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation scamsters honey-trapped government and bank officials to misappropriate money.

The former minister claimed that high-end luxury cars were purchased with the money meant for the welfare of tribal people. The money was laundered and used in different elections, including the Lok Sabha election, he further claimed.

Former minister Narasimha Nayak (Raju Gowda) alleged that the state government played a dubious role in the scam alleging that Rs 3 crore cannot be transferred without the approval of the Finance Secretary, but on a single day Rs 50 crore was transferred.

According to the BJP leader, the money was transferred to the accounts of 16 business persons. The amount transferred was somewhere between Rs 4.12 crore to Rs 5.98 crore.

Both BJP leaders demanded the arrest of Congress MLA B Nagendra who resigned as Tribal Welfare minister after the scam came to light.

The alleged scam was uncovered when the Accounts Superintendent of the Corporation, Chandrasekharan P, took his own life on 26 May and left a suicide note alleging that a sum of Rs 187 crore was illegally transferred from the corporation.

This includes Rs 88.62 crore illegally credited to various accounts of some IT companies and a Hyderabad-based cooperative bank, according to official sources.

The Congress government thereafter constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT), which has so far arrested 11 people in connection with the case. *—PTI*

Action will be taken once SIT report is out: CM

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje has appealed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to direct central agencies to thoroughly investigate the illegal transfer of funds from the state-owned Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation. arandlaje also highlighted the suicide of the Accounts Superintendent of the corporation, Chandrasekharan P, which brought the scam to light. Karandlaje, who is an MP from Karnataka's Lok Sabha constituency of Bengaluru North, noted that Chandrasekharan's suicide may be linked to the intense pressures and potential threats he faced in relation to scam. *—PTI*

Couple found hanging from same tree in Kolar

KOLAR, 11 JULY

A couple Lakshman, 38, and his wife Malashree, 35, was found hanging from the same tree in the wee hours of Thursday at Kalvamanjali village under Vemagal police limits in Kolar. Lakshman was an auto driver while his wife Malashree was working as a cook under the midday meal scheme. Police inspector Hemanth said that the couple was married for 15 years and are survived by two children-- daughter is studying in 7th standard, and their son is in 5th standard. *—Salar News*

NSDC signs MoU with VTU to establish skill hub

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

Bridging the gap between academia and industry, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding Thursday in Bengaluru. According to NSDC, the partnership aims to establish skill hub centres in 150 colleges affiliated with VTU and set up centres of excellence in select engineering colleges. The idea is to enroll about 240 students from each college in the Future Skills programme of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna, the flagship scheme of Skill India Mission. *—PTI*

News anchor Divya Vasantha held in extortion case

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

A Kannada news channel anchor who was absconding for over three days was arrested in Kerala by Jeevan Bhima Nagar police on Thursday. Divya Vasantha is one of the accused in an extortion case. On 1 July , owner of 'Tree Spa and Beauty Parlour, filed a complaint alleging attempted extortion by the Rajanukunte Venkatesh, claiming to be CEO of Raj News Channel, Divya Vasantha and her brother Sandesh Vasantha.Speaking to **Salar News**, Jeevan Bhima Nagar police said, "We arrested Divya Vasantha during the early hours of Thursday after receiving the tip off of her residing in Kerala and currently produced her for interrogation regarding the case." The police investigations revealed Venkatesh and accomplices had formed a WhatsApp group named 'Spy Research Team' to strategise on extortion methods. *—Salar News*

POLITICAL TURMOIL

MUDA 'scam' is a conspiracy as I'm from backward class, claims CM

MYSURU, 11 JULY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday alleged that he was unnecessarily being targeted in the case of alleged fraudulent allotment of sites to land losers by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), which involves plots given to his wife Parvathi.

Claiming that a conspiracy is being hatched against him out of heartburn as he belongs to a backward class community and has become the chief minister for a second time, he asserted that he won't fear such conspiracies.

The chief minister was reacting to BJP state president B Y Vijayendra announcing a "mega" protest in Mysuru—Siddaramaiah's home district—on 12 July in the alleged "scam". "Haven't we given it (MUDA scam) for a probe..... BJP is doing things for politics, we will have to do politics if they do politics. Let them do it (protest) under anyone's leadership. If they do it, we will also do it politically," Siddaramaiah told reporters here. To a question about BJP trying to target him over sites allotted to his wife, he said, "They have to say where it is illegal. We are saying that things are legal. Let them show that it is illegal."

Siddaramaiah **PHOTO: PTI**

It is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA.

The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where MUDA developed a residential layout.

The controversial scheme envisages allotting 50 per cent of developed land to the land loser in lieu of undeveloped land acquired for forming layouts. *—PTI*

BJP MLA urges HC to begin case on its own into scam

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

Senior BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal has written to the Chief Justice of High Court NV Anjaria requesting him to initiate a case on the court's own accord into the alternative plot scam in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority in which Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife is allegedly a beneficiary.

The BJP MLA requested him to initiate the legal proceedings into the scam to hand over the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Quoting media reports he said a minister in the Cabinet took all the related files from MUDA to Bengaluru, an act which appears to be an attempt to cover up the corruption.

—Salar News

Lokayukta raids 11 govt officers

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

Lokayukta sleuths on Thursday conducted raids at 56 places across the State and found that 11 government officers and engineers had amassed assets worth Rs 45.14 crore that are disproportionate to their known sources of income, the office of the Lokayukta said.

In an early morning operation, about 100 officials carried out simultaneous raids 56 locations in nine districts against government officers who allegedly accumulated Disproportionate Assets (DA).

The officers who were raided include Assistant Executive Engineer in Panchayat Raj Engineering Department in Belagavi D Mahadev Bannur, Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited Executive Engineer D H Umesh, Assistant Executive Engineer at BESCOM Vigilance Police Station in Davangere MS Prabhakar, Belagavi Nirmiti Kendra Project Director Shekhar Gouda Kuradgi, Retired PWD Chief Engineer M Ravindra, and PWD Chief Engineer KG Jagadeesh, a statement issued by the Lokayukta said.

According to the Lokayukta office, Shekhar Gouda Kuradgi was found to be in possession of the highest amount of assets disproportionate to his known sources of income -- worth Rs 7.88 crore -- among those raided on Thursday. *—PTI*

RTO cracks down on 665 illegally plying vehicles in B'luru

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

The Bengaluru Regional Transport Office (RTO) has launched a significant crackdown on illegally operating vehicles from other states and those violating traffic norms within the City. RTO registered 665 cases and seized 302 vehicles for infractions in just five days. Vehicles registered outside Karnataka require a No Objection Certificate (NOC) and must pay taxes to ply within the State. However, many owners have bypassed these regulations, prompting this enforcement action. Vehicles with registration plates from Delhi, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Haryana, and Nagaland were found to be operating illegally in the City. Additional Commissioner for Transport, C Mallikarjuna, told **Salar News**, "The operation targeted multiple locations including Madiwala, HSR Layout, Silk Board, Bellandur, and Ring Road."

—Salar News

Karandlaje urges Shah to initiate detailed probe

MYSURU, 11 JULY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said action will be taken and responsibilities will be fixed in connection with an alleged illegal money transfer scam involving a state-run Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation, once the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case submits its report.

He also rejected the Opposition's demand for his resignation in connection with the scam.

Replying to a question about the Opposition demanding his resignation alleging that such a big scam wouldn't have happened without coming to his notice as he is also the finance minister, he said, "if that is the case, for what has happened in the bank in connection with the case, Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Finance Minister should also resign then, also the Prime Minister.

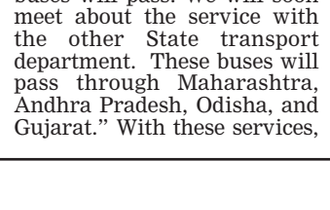
Will they give (resignation)? An investigation is going on, neither the preliminary nor final report has come, after filing of the chargesheet, the report will come." *—PTI*

'Guarantee plans not burdening exchequer'

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday disapproved of claims that the state's guarantee schemes have imposed a financial strain on the exchequer.

Addressing the media at the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) office, Shivakumar asserted, "The State government is not facing any financial burden due to the guarantee schemes. We had given our word and we have kept it. Guarantee schemes are not draining any resources and we will continue them." His statement was in response to remarks by Basavaraja Rayareddy, who had suggested that these schemes were depleting the state's finances.



DK Shivakumar **PHOTO: PTI**

- DK Shivakumar on Thursday said that the party will analyse where they made mistakes as Congress expected to win 14-15 seats in the general elections

Shivakumar emphasised the schemes' purpose, stating, "We have not introduced these guarantee schemes for votes; it is meant to improve the lives of people, who are badly affected by the price rise. The people are watching all these and they will support us."

When questioned about the Cauvery River Water Committee (CRWC) meeting on the release of water to Tamil Nadu, Shivakumar expressed concerns about the current water levels. "I do not want to comment on this yet, let's pray for good rains," he said.

"The fact-finding committee collected the opinions of MLAs and office bearers today. It will meet the defeated candidates and other leaders tomorrow to gather their feedback," he said.

—Salar News

RTI REPORT REVEALS

Animal Husbandry Dept in transfer tussle

VAISHNAVI GOPALRAJ
BENGALURU, 11 JULY

SALAR EXCLUSIVE

There is brewing discontent within the Animal Husbandry Department as it is faces accusations of unfair transfer practices. Though the departmental norms mandate a minimum five-year tenure before transfers, newcomers claim that they are being forcefully transferred. On the contrary, officials who have been on the job for eight years or so continue to serve without being transferred.

According to an RTI, a copy of which is available with Salar News, new officials who haven't even completed five years in their current positions have been transferred.

The RTI reveals that 21 officials have served over eight years in their current roles, and an additional 20 have served more than five years, yet they have not been transferred.

The affected newcomers have appealed to the Animal Husbandry Ministry to intervene and halt their transfers. They argue that the transfers violate regulations and disrupt departmental operations.

"The rules are clear: officials cannot be away from their home department for more than five years. Yet, our department has over 21 officials who have been here for close to eight years. Frequent transfers, even of officials who have only served two years, disrupt operations and project continuity," a BBMP official told **Salar News** on the condition of anonymity.

These concerns align with recommendations made by the Fifth Pay Commission, which reportedly advised against frequent transfers and suggested setting minimum tenures for each position.

The transfer of the newcomers leads to a delay in projects.

A few projects that will be hold are animal birth control programme for stray dogs and anti-rabies vaccination programme, first modern slaughterhouse at Kanakapura in which animal waste will be processed into protein-packed products for the first time in the State, a place to set up to host ante-mortem and post-mortem examinations of animals and many other projects .

Animal Husbandry Minister K Venkatesh did not respond to the comments.

—Salar News

KSRTC to start bus services from City to Gujarat, Odisha

BENGALURU, 11 JULY

PHOTO: SALAR

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) is preparing to launch its longest run daily bus services, connecting Bengaluru with Ahmedabad in Gujarat and Puri in Odisha.

These European-style air-conditioned sleeper buses will cover a distance of 1,500km.

Speaking to **Salar News**, V Anbukumar, Managing Director of KSRTC said, "We have taken permission from the states through which these buses will pass. We will soon meet about the service with the other State transport department. These buses will pass through Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Gujarat." With these services, the KSRTC aims to meet a significant demand for long-distance buses from Bengaluru and provide KSRTC's reliable services and extensive fleet of Volvo buses. KSRTC's longest routes are from Bengaluru to Mumbai and Shirdi, each approximately 1,000 km long. The decision to expand the KSRTC services to other north Indian states is to analyse the experience and profits of the state transport department.

—Salar News

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Got death threats over party leader's arrest, says TMC MP

KOLKATA, 11 JULY

Trinamool Congress leader and MP Sougata Roy claimed that, he received a phone call in which the caller threatened to kill him if the arrested party leader Jayant Singh was not released soon. Singh, a TMC leader from the Ariadaha area in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, is a prime suspect in a mob violence incident that occurred on 30 June and was arrested by the police last week. Ariadaha comes under the Dum Dum Lok Sabha constituency which Roy represents as a four-term MP. "I received a call from an unknown number. The person on the other end claimed that if I did not ensure the release of Jayant Singh, I would be killed". —*PTI*

HC lists Kejri's plea for 9 Sept against ED summons

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Thursday listed for hearing on 9 September Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's petition challenging the summonses issued to him by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with its probe into an excise policy-linked money laundering case. A bench headed by Justice Prathiba M Singh granted four more weeks to the AAP leader to file a rejoinder to the reply submitted by the ED. The senior counsel, appearing for Kejriwal, sought more time to file the rejoinder saying there are certain changes in the circumstances and they have not been given a proper legal interview, a plea for which is pending in the high court. The counsel for the ED had earlier said the petition against the summonses was infructuous after Kejriwal's arrest by the agency on 21 March. —*PTI*

Sanjay Singh gets bail in Covid norm violation case

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

AAP Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh on Thursday surrendered before an MP/MLA court here in a case related to the violation of COVID-19 norms in 2021, and was granted bail. His advocate Madan Pratap Singh said, "Sanjay Singh surrendered in the MP/MLA court in compliance of a bailable warrant issued by the court. The hearing was done before Special Magistrate Shubham Verma in the court. The court granted bail to Singh on a bond of Rs 20,000. Around 50 people attended the meeting that was held during the covid-19 pandemic without taking permission from the local administration, Pandey said. —*PTI*

Bihar gets first transwoman police sub-inspector

PATNA, 11 JULY

It was a dream come true for Manvi Madhu Kashyap when she cleared the recruitment test and became the first transwoman Sub-Inspector in the Bihar police. After rejection for being a transgender, Kashyap finally scripted history. "It is like a dream come true for me. I am incredibly grateful for each and every person who has been there with me," she said. Her journey does not stop here. "I want to visit my village in police uniform to convey the message that one can achieve anything through hard work and dedication," said Kashyap. She cleared the Bihar Police Subordinate Selection Commission exams, the results of which were declared on Tuesday." I must say that the path to my success was filled with challenges, particularly due to my identity as a transgender woman. —*PTI*

BJP maligning WB: Didi on mob assaults

She says media telecasted video deliberately

KOLKATA, 11 JULY

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday blamed the BJP and a section of the media for maligning the state over the recent incident of mob assault in Ariadaha in North 24 Parganas district.

She said a two-year-old incident, a video clip of which had gone viral, happened when Arjun Singh was BJP MP of Barrackpore Lok Sabha constituency.

She accused a section of the TV channels of showing the old incident repeatedly ahead of Wednesday's by-elections at the behest of the BJP.

The TMC supremo claimed that some TV channels are working in a biased manner favouring the BJP due to fear of CBI-ED raids.

She named a couple of TV channels which allegedly operate in a biased manner, contending that she does not want to identify other such media houses as it would provide them "unnecessary publicity".

The video that went viral shows TMC leader Jayant Singh and his supporters beating a man with sticks PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

After the old video clip showing a girl being assaulted by a group of people in Ariadaha, the police initiated a suo motu case and arrested three persons, including local TMC leader and prime suspect Jayant Singh.

Singh, who was arrested in 2023 in another case and was out on bail with a bond promising no further illegal activities, is now facing additional charges for violating this condition.

Barrackpore Police Commissioner CP Alok Rajoria on Wednesday stated that eight persons have been identified from the footage, and stringent action will be taken against all those involved. —*PTI*

Mamata to attend Ambani wedding

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will be attending the wedding of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant tomorrow. She said she would also meet Nationalist Congress Party supremo Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray in Mumbai, and might also meet Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav. —*PTI*

EC seeks report on bogus voting

The Election Commission of India has sought an action taken report from the West Bengal CEO after receiving nearly 100 complaints from BJP regarding bogus voting, violence and intimidation during Wednesday's bypolls at four assembly constituencies, a senior official said. TMC has denied those allegations and dubbed them as "baseless". —*PTI*

INDIA, Cong will raise Manipur issue in Parl: RaGa

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi meets victims of the Manipur violence during his visit to a relief camp, in Moirang PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The Congress and the INDIA bloc will raise the need for peace in Manipur with full force in Parliament to put pressure on the government to end this tragedy, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said on Thursday, days after his visit to the violence-hit state.

He also reiterated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should visit Manipur and appeal for peace.

"I have visited Manipur three times since violence broke out there, but unfortunately there is no improvement in the situation -- even today the state is divided into two parts. Houses are burning, innocent lives are in danger and thousands of families are forced to live in relief camps," the former Congress chief said.

During his stay in Manipur, Gandhi had visited three relief camps in different districts of the BJP-ruled state and interacted with people belonging to both the warring ethnic groups -- Meiteis and Kukis -- who were displaced by the violence.

Gandhi had also visited Manipur weeks after ethnic violence broke out in the northeastern state on 3 May last year. He also began his 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' from the state in January 2024.

Parliament's Budget Session will be held between 22 July and 12 August. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the budget on 23 July. Manipur plunged into violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities in May last year. Since then, some 200 people have been killed while thousands have been displaced following large-scale arson that gutted homes and government buildings. —*PTI*

Chargesheet against youth in UGC-NET paper leak

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is likely to file a chargesheet against a youth who allegedly circulated a "doctored" screenshot of the UGC-NET paper on Telegram which led to the cancellation of the exam after an alert from the Union Home Ministry about a possible "breach", officials said.

CBI did not find any large-scale conspiracy in the episode and would limit the chargesheet to offences of attempt to cheat or cheating, they said.

The central agency's probe into the alleged UGC-NET paper leak had found that the screenshot of the "leaked" question paper for the 18 June exam was "doctored" by a school student, the officials said.

The CBI has informally conveyed its findings to the government and is likely to file a chargesheet against the youth, they said.

- The CBI has informally conveyed its findings to the government and is likely to file a chargesheet against the youth, they said

More than 11 lakh candidates had registered for the exam which determines eligibility for junior research fellowship, appointment as assistant professors and admission to PhD in Indian universities and colleges.

The exam was cancelled based on inputs received by the University Grants Commission from the I4C that the paper was available on the darknet and was allegedly being sold for Rs 5-6 lakh on messaging platforms, sources said.

The UGC-NET will now be held afresh from 21 August to 4 September. —*PTI*

Kathua terror attack: Officials hold meeting; manhunt still on

RAJOURI/JAMMU, 11 JULY

Senior Border Security Force (BSF) and police officials from Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab on Thursday discussed ways to share real-time inputs and further strengthen the anti-infiltration grid along the International Border (IB) in a meeting in Kathua district, where five army personnel were killed in an ambush by terrorists three days ago. The manhunt is still on for the terrorists.

The interstate security review meeting came in the backdrop of information that the terrorists behind the Monday ambush on an army patrol could have infiltrated through the International Border either into Kathua and Samba districts in Jammu region or Pathankot in Punjab, officials, aware of the developments, said. The security grid along the IB in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab was reviewed along with measures to plug any loopholes to counter infiltration from Pakistan.

The officials said the routes in Jammu used by the terrorists, were active when militancy was at its peak in the area over two decades ago. —*PTI*

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee President Vikar Rasool Wani protest against terror attacks, in Jammu on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

FIRs against 5 lodge owners for failure to install CCTVs

JAMMU, 11 JULY

Police on Thursday registered FIRs against owners of hotels and lodges for failing to install CCTV cameras in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district. During the inspection of hotels and lodges in Katra, five lodges were found without CCTV cameras, he said. In this regard, five FIRs were registered in Katra against the lodge owners for non-compliance with the order, he said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

SC summons Chief secy of 16 states for non-compliance

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The Supreme Court on Thursday summoned the chief and finance secretaries of 16 states for non-compliance of the Second National Judicial Pay Commission (SNJP) recommendations on the payment of arrears of pension and other retirement benefits to the judicial officers.

Abench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said, "We know how to extract compliance now. If we just say that the chief secretary will be present if the affidavit is not filed then it will not be filed.

According to the order, the bench directed the top two bureaucrats of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Manipur, Odisha and Rajasthan to appear before it on 23 August.

It passed the orders after taking note of the submissions and perusing the note provided by lawyer K Parmeswar who is assisting the court as amicus curiae (a friend of court). —*PTI*

INLD-BSP in Haryana; Chautala to be CM face

CHANDIGARH,11 JULY

The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) has decided to again join hands with its former ally Bahujan Samaj Party for the Haryana Assembly polls due later this year, the leaders of the two parties announced on Thursday.

Alliance leaders have also decided to project INLD leader Abhay Chautala as its chief ministerial face.

Under the arrangement, out of 90 assembly seats in Haryana, the BSP will contest 37 seats leaving the rest for its senior partner in Haryana, where the ruling BJP is eyeing to come to power for third time in a row.

Chautala asserted that the alliance is not based on any selfish interests, but has been formed keeping in mind people's feelings.

BSP national coordinator Akash Anand said recently BSP supremo Mayawati and Chautala held a detailed meeting regarding firming up of the alliance.

This alliance will not be limited to fighting assembly polls only and we will fight other elections in the state jointly in the future, Anand said.

At present, Chautala is the lone member of the INLD in the 90-member Haryana Assembly while the BSP does not have any member in the House. —*PTI*

Rise in suicide cases a social issue, says SC

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Terming the rising number of suicides a "social issue", the Supreme Court on Thursday granted four weeks to the Centre for filing a comprehensive reply to a PIL seeking effective implementation of a public health programme for prevention and reduction of suicides.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of the submissions of lawyer and petitioner Gaurav Kumar Bansal that effective steps are needed to deal with the rising number of suicide cases and asked the Centre to file a comprehensive affidavit.

The top court, on 2 August 2019, had issued notices to Centre and all states and Union territories on the PIL.

The plea has also sought a direction to all the states and Union territories to start a project for providing support through call centres and helplines to people.

Referring to data provided by Delhi Police, the petition said 140 cases of suicides of children below 18 years were recorded between 2014 and 2018. The plea said the failure of the authorities in "drafting, designing and implementing public health programme for the prevention and reduction of suicides in India is not only violative of section 29 and 115 of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 but is also in violation of Article 21".

It also said that the authorities should be asked to provide status report on the steps taken by them to implement public health programme for prevention and reduction of suicides. —*PTI*

SC judge recuses from hearing Sisodia's bail plea

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

PHOTO: PTI

Supreme Court judge Justice Sanjay Kumar on Thursday recused from hearing pleas of AAP leader and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia by which his bail petitions has been sought to be revived in the excise policy scam cases.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Sanjay Karol and Sanjay Kumar said another bench in which Justice Kumar is not a member will take up Sisodia's two separate pleas for reviving his bail petitions in cases filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the excise policy scam case.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Sisodia, requested the bench to list the matter urgently, saying time is of essence.

He said the trial has not yet commenced in both the cases. The bench said another bench will take it up on 15 July.

On 4 June, the top court had refused to entertain the bail pleas of Sisodia in cases lodged by the CBI and the ED in connection with the alleged Delhi liquor policy scam.

On 30 October last year, the top court had denied him bail in the corruption and money laundering cases related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, saying the accusation of "windfall gains" of Rs 338 crore to wholesale liquor dealers was "tentatively supported" by evidence.

Sisodia was arrested by the CBI on 26 February 2023 for his alleged role in the liquor policy case.

The ED had arrested him in the money laundering case stemming from the CBI FIR on 9 March 2023. —*PTI*

HC judge recuses from NIA's death penalty for Malik

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Delhi High Court Judge Amit Sharma on Thursday recused himself from hearing a plea by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) seeking death penalty for separatist leader Yasin Malik in a terror funding case.

The matter was listed before a division bench headed by Justice Prathiba M Singh after a change in the roster of judges dealing with such cases.

"List before another bench, of which Justice Sharma is not a member, on 9 August," Justice Singh said.

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chief, who is currently serving a life term in the case, was virtually present for the court proceedings from the Tihar jail here.

The court directed that he will appear virtually on the next date as well. On 29 May, 2023, the High Court had issued a notice to Malik on the NIA's plea seeking death penalty. —*PTI*

AGE RELAXATIONS

Ex-Agniveers to get reservations

Continued from Page 1

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The chiefs of CISF and the BSF on Thursday said 10 per cent posts of constables will be reserved in their respective forces for former Agniveers in line with a decision by the Union Home Ministry.

The remarks by CISF Director General Nina Singh and her BSF counterpart Nitin Agrawal came amid fresh spotlight on the Agnipath recruitment scheme for short-term induction of personnel in the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

"The Union Home Ministry has taken an important decision regarding the recruitment of ex-Agniveers. Accordingly, the CISF is also preparing the process of the recruitment of ex-Agniveer," Singh said. The chief of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) said 10 per cent jobs will be reserved for ex-Agniveers.

PHOTO: PTI

"In physical tests also, they will be given exemption along with the relaxation on the age. In the first year the age relaxation is for five five years and in the subsequent year, the age relaxation will be three years," she said.

"Ex-Agniveer will be able to take advantage of this and the CISF will ensure that. This will be beneficial for the CISF too as the force will get trained personnel," Singh said.

In June 2022, Agnipath recruitment scheme was rolled out with an aim to bring down the age profile of the three services. —*PTI*

Farmers' body SKM says it will resume agitation

Farmers demand MSP legal guarantee and loan waiver

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Farmers' body SKM on Thursday announced it will resume its agitation over its pending demands, including a legal guarantee to MSP and loan waiver, and submit a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella organisation of farm unions that led the 2020-21 farmers' protest, made the announcement a day after its general body met but indicated that unlike then, its agitation this time may not be a march to Delhi.

Leaders of the outfit told a press conference that appointments will be sought between 16 July and 18 July to meet the Prime Minister, the leader of Opposition and MPs of both Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha and give them the memorandum listing the farmers' demands.

Appointments of SKM leaders will be conducted between 16 July and 18 July after meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi **PHOTO: PTI**

SKM also said memorials to honour those who died during the 2020-21 protest should be built at Delhi's Tikri and Singhu borders, where agitators camped for more than a year as part of their agitation that also pressed for compensation of farmers who died in the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence in Uttar Pradesh.

Asked if farmers will march to Delhi again, the SKM leaders said this time they are focusing on nationwide protests, particularly in assembly election-bound Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana.

SKM leaders claimed that BJP faced losses in 159 rural-dominated parliamentary constituencies in different state in recent Lok Sabha polls due to the farmers' movement. Besides Mollah, farmer leaders Avik Saha, Prem Chand Gehlawat, P Krishnaprasad, Sunilam, Yudhvir Singh and R Venkaiya also addressed reporters.

They said as part of resuming the agitation, they will seek appointments with MPs of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, as well as Modi and Gandhi on 16, 17 or 18 July to submit the memorandum. On 9 August, the SKM will observe "Quit India Day" as "Corporates Quit India Day" by holding demonstrations across the country in support of its demands, the organisation said. —*PTI*

Odisha ADM dies on stage while singing bhajan

BHUBANESWAR, 11 JULY

An additional district magistrate (ADM) collapsed on the stage while singing a Jagannath bhajan at a get-together of government officials in Odisha's Gajapati district and later died, an official said on Thursday. The deceased, identified as Birendra Kumar Das, was serving as ADM (Revenue) in Gajapati district. A video clip of the incident which took place on Wednesday evening went viral on social media. "The ADM suddenly collapsed while singing a bhajan and was taken to a local hospital, where it was found that his blood pressure was very high. After preliminary treatment, he was shifted to MKCG Medical and Hospital in Berhampur, where doctors declared him brought dead," Gajapati Collector Smruti Ranjan Pradhan said. —*PTI*

Ammunition and arms seized in Manipur, 2 held

IMPHAL, 11 JULY

Two members of armed group Arambai Tenggol have been arrested and firearms seized from their possession in Manipur's Imphal West district, police said. The two persons, identified as Kangabam Lenin Singh, 43, and Toijam Shantikishore, 50, were apprehended in Nambul Mapal area late on Wednesday, a police statement said. An INSAS rifle along with a magazine and 16 cartridges, and a .38 calibre pistol and a magazine along with three cartridges were seized from their possession. A case has been registered for further investigation and legal action. —*PTI*

Man nabbed for hunting birds at Chilika Lake

BERHAMPUR, 11 JULY

A 48-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly hunting birds in Odisha's Chilika Lake, a forest official said. The carcasses of 14 birds of two species -- Grey Headed Swamphen (14) and Water Cock (one) – were seized from the duo. He was hunting birds at Bidharpursahi near Bhusandpur in Tangi forest range and 18 carcasses of four bird species were seized from his possession, Chilika Wildlife Division DFO Amlan Nayak said. The carcasses of the birds include those of Grey Headed Swamphen (14), Lesser Whistling Duck (2) and one each of Pheasant Tailed Jacana and Bronze Winged Jacana, he said. Wildlife personnel suspected that the accused person was taking the carcasses to the market for sale and for own consumption. Nayak said the poacher was suspected to have hunted the birds by poisoning them in Chilika Lake. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Goa police arrests actor for 'blocking' minister's car

PANAJI, 11 JULY

Goa police on Thursday arrested actor Gaurav Bakshi for allegedly restraining the movement of state Animal Husbandry Minister Nilkant Halarnkar by blocking his car, an official said. Bakshi, who has acted in web series and a few films, claimed in his counter-complaint that it was the minister's car that had blocked his way. The actor was arrested after Halarnkar's personal security officer (PSO) filed a complaint at Colvale police station in North Goa district, a senior police official said. He was booked under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections related to "obstructing public servant" and "wilful restraint", the official added. The minister told reporters that the incident took place when he was leaving in his car after attending a function at Revora panchayat hall in North Goa district on Wednesday. —*PTI*

Container ship San Fernando which is 300 metres long and 48 metres wide reaches Vizhinjam International Seaport Ltd from China, in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

- Vizhinjam Seaport in Kerala, led by the Adani Group, aims to enhance India's maritime capabilities. It aims to create over 5,000 jobs.
- Local fishermen backed by Latin Catholic Church protested over environmental and socio-economic concerns since 5 December, 2015.
- Protesters demand rehabilitation for displaced families and guaranteed wages for non-fishing days.
- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan however insisted on continuing construction.
- Protests peaked in August 2022 with locals clashing with cops, disrupting construction.
- Kerala High Court ordered the police to remove protesters to continue construction.
- Delays caused by protests caused Adani Group major financial losses.

Research: Reha Fathima

14 LAKH AFFECTED

Toll hits 100 in Assam; Tamil Nadu braces for heavy rain

Vehicles move through a waterlogged road after heavy rains submerged a bridge causing difficulty to commuters, in Tamil Nadu **PHOTO: PTI**

GUWAHATI, 11 JULY

The flood situation in Assam remained grim on Thursday even though flood waters started receding in many parts of the state, officials said.

Heavy rain, accompanied by lightning and thunderstorms, pummeled various parts of Tamil Nadu.

"Moderate rain is very likely to occur at most places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya, and at many places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura," the Regional Meteorological Centre in Guwahati said.

A report by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said that five more people lost their lives and over 14 lakh people are reeling under the deluge across 25 districts. The toll in this year's flood, landslide, storm and lightning has now mounted to 100. Dhubri is the worst hit with over 2.37 lakh people suffering, followed by Cachar (1.82 lakh) and Golaghat (1.12 lakh), it said. At present, 2,580 villages are under water and 39,898.92 hectares of crop area has been damaged across Assam, the ASDMA said.—*PTI*

A landslide obstructed the route to Manimahesh Dal lake in Bharmour area of Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh on Thursday. Though Manimahesh Yatra starts from 17 August till 15 September, devotees and tourists visit year round **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Moderate to heavy rains in Mumbai

MUMBAI, 11 JULY

After light showers for two days, the city and suburbs received moderate to heavy spells of rain on Thursday, but there was no report of any major waterlogging. Local trains were running with a slight delay while road traffic in Mumbai was normal, as per authorities. —*PTI*

3 killed in Jharkhand lightning strikes

SERAIKELA, 11 JULY

Three persons, including a woman and her minor son, were killed and three others were injured in a lightning strike in Jharkhand's Seraikela-Kharswan district, police said. The incident took place in Bhadudih village in Chandil police station area on Wednesday evening when the victims, took shelter under a tarpaulin. —*PTI*

Panel formed to probe Balabhadra's idol falling incident

BHUBANESWAR, 11 JULY

Puri's Jagannath temple has formed a three-member panel to probe the falling of Lord Balabhadra idol on some servitors while it was being taken from the chariot to Gundicha temple as part of the Rath Yatra festival, an official said.

The committee has expressed concern over the incident during the 'Pahandi' ritual on Tuesday night and also held a detailed discussion on the incident, said VV Yadav, chief administrator of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) in Puri.

The three-member panel consisting of an additional district magistrate (ADM), SJTA administrator (development), and a DSP rank police officer will investigate the matter and submit a report within 10 days after completion of 'Niladri Bije' (return of Lord Jagannath and his siblings to their temple), he said. The committee will examine the available video footage and see whether designated servitors were there or not along with other aspects that led to such an incident, Yadav told reporters. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

HC orders removal of encroachments on Yamuna bank

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The Delhi High Court has directed the vice-chairperson of the DDA to remove all encroachments and illegal constructions on the Yamuna River bank, the river bed as well as on drains flowing into the river.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan appointed the DDA vice-chairperson as the nodal officer for coordinating with officials of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the Delhi Police, DMRC, Irrigation and Flood Control Department, PWD, the Delhi Pollution Control Board as well as the Forest Department for this purpose, and asked him to convene a meeting of all officials concerned within a week.

The court passed the order on 8 July while dealing with a petition seeking directions to demolish certain unauthorised constructions on the Yamuna river bank near Shaheen Bagh.

The plea also sought a direction to the authorities to take steps to prevent illegal constructions on the Yamuna river bank and its floodplain in the near future.

"Keeping in view the aforesaid, this Court directs the Vice Chairman, DDA, to remove all encroachments and illegal construction on the Yamuna river bank, river bed and drains flowing into river Yamuna," ordered the bench. —*PTI*

Controversial IAS officer Puja Khedkar joins duty

MUMBAI, 11 JULY

Controversial IAS officer Puja Khedkar on Thursday took charge as an assistant collector at the Washim District Collectorate in Vidarbha region, but declined to comment on the flurry of claims that she used illegal means to clear her civil services exam.

Khedkar, 32, who has been accused of allegedly misusing benefits under the physical disabilities category and Other Backward Class quota to secure a position in the Indian Administrative Services, was transferred on Monday.

"I am happy to join duty at the Washim District Collectorate and am looking forward to working here," she said. —*PTI*

M'rashtra: ₹4,131 cr drugs seized in 150 days

MUMBAI, 11 JULY

The anti-narcotics teams seized drugs of Rs 4,131 crore in five months of 2024 in Maharashtra, a 360 per cent increase over the value of contraband seized in the last calendar year, the government data shows.

The government also found the involvement of some police officials in drugs trade and they have been dismissed from service, Deputy Chief Minister Fadnavis said in the state legislative council on Thursday.

He was replying to a query raised by Congress legislator Ashok alias Bhai Jagtap.

"The anti-narcotics teams carried out 12,648 operations and seized banned substances valued at Rs 897 crore in calendar year 2023. However, as of May this year, the teams conducted 6,529 operations and confiscated banned substances of Rs 4,131 crore in the state," Fadnavis said.

These teams were formed following the Centre's request to all state governments to develop a joint action plan, coordinating the efforts of various departments to check the production and trade of banned substances, he said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Drugs worth ₹30 crore seized in Assam, 2 held

GUWAHATI, 11 JULY

'Yaba' tablets worth around Rs 30 crore have been seized in Karimganj district of Assam and two peddlers were arrested, a senior police officer said on Thursday. According to Karimganj SP Partha Protim Das, a police team intercepted a vehicle coming from neighbouring Mizoram on Wednesday night after getting specific inputs about movement of drug consignment. —*PTI*

MP MAN CLAIMS WIFE LEFT HIM AS HE IS DARK-SKINNED

GWALIOR, 11 JULY

A 24-year-old man in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior city has claimed his wife left him because of his dark complexion and also filed a harassment complaint against him.

The man has also filed a police complaint against his wife over the issue, an official said on Thursday. The police have called both of them for counselling on Saturday before initiating any action in the matter.

Talking to reporters on Wednesday, the man, resident of Vicky Factory area in the city, said he got married about 14 months back. Soon after the marriage, his wife started troubling him and kept taunting him because of his dark complexion, he claimed.

His wife gave birth to a girl about a month back, he said. "But after 10 days, she left the child (at the man's home) and went to stay with her parents," the man said.

"When I went to her house to bring her back, she again raised the issue of my dark complexion and refused to come back with me," he claimed. When contacted, Deputy Superintendent of Police Kiran Ahirwar said the woman had gone to her parent's house, leaving the child at her in-laws' place. —*PTI*

10 MP schools to return ₹65 cr fees collected illegally

JABALPUR, 11 JULY

The authorities in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district have directed ten private schools to refund about Rs 65 crore charged extra as tuition fees from more than 81,000 students over seven academic sessions, an official said on Thursday.

The schools had hiked tuition fees in violation of the law, said Jabalpur District Education Officer Ghanshyam Soni.

The district-level committee set up under the Madhya Pradesh Niji Vidyalaya (Fees Tatha Sambandhit Vishayon Ka Viniyaman) Adhiniyam, 2017, found them to be charging extra fees from students, he said. The authorities have junked the illegal increase in fees by these schools and the collection of Rs 64.58 crore from 81,117 students between 2018-19 and 2024-25, he said.

On 27 May, the Jabalpur district administration had got 11 FIRs registered against school functionaries and a few bookshop owners for allegedly illegally raising fees and textbook prices respectively. As per the rules, a school is required to get the approval of the district administration if it intends to raise the fees by more than 10 per cent. —*PTI*

FOR GOVT EMPLOYEES ONLY

Assam gives leave to spend time with parents

GUWAHATI, 11 JULY

The Assam government has declared two days of special casual leave in November for its employees to spend time with their parents or parents-in-law, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said on Thursday. The special leaves cannot be used for personal enjoyment and those without parents or parents-in-laws will not be eligible for the leaves, it added.

The leaves can be availed along with holiday for Chhat Puja on 7 November, second Saturday holiday on 9 November and Sunday on November, the CMO said.

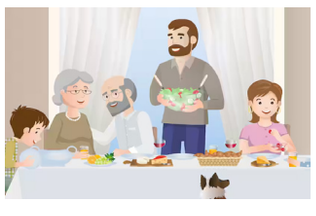


PHOTO: PIXABAY

- The two special casual leaves for spending time with parents and parents-in-law for government employees was announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in 2021

"The Assam government, under the leadership of CM @ himantabiswa, has declared special casual leave for state government employees on 6 and 8 November 2024, to spend time with their parents or parents-in-law," the CMO said in a post on X.

It said the leave must be used "solely for spending time with aging parents or parents-in-law to honour, respect, and care for them, and not for personal enjoyment". It said that employees in essential services can avail it in a phased manner, and those who do not have parents or parents-in-law will not be entitled to it.

The two special casual leaves for spending time with parents and parents-in-law for government employees was announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in his first Independence Day speech after assuming office in 2021. —*PTI*

THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE

Possibly in search of lionesses, two lion brothers Tibu and Jacob swam 1.3 km across an African river known to be infested with hippos and crocodiles, making it the longest documented swim for African lions with visual evidence. They faced fierce competition for lionesses and lost a fight for female affection in the hours leading up to the swim. In one of the video footage accompanying the study, Jacob can be seen limping and leading the way through the national park, before approaching the shore

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

HOW MUCH DOES NATO SPEND ON DEFENCE?

The members of the military alliance pledged to spend at least 2per cent of the value of their economies - measured by GDP - on defence per year by 2024.

According to Nato estimates for 2024, Poland will be the top spender for the second year running, allocating 4.1per cent of GDP (the total value of goods and services produced).

Estonia is in second place at 3.4 per cent with the US in third place at 3.4per cent, which is about the same level as it has been spending for the last decade.

The UK comes ninth on the list with 2.3 per cent. The government has committed to increasing that to 2.5per cent but has not said when this will happen.

The average for Nato members in Europe and Canada is estimated at 2.0per cent.

Map showing defence spending by Nato members in Europe. Poland and Estonia had the highest spending as a per cent of GDP among European members.

The US is a global superpower, with military commitments around the world, not just to Nato. It had GDP equal to all the rest of the members of Nato in 2024, and its spending on defence is two thirds of the Nato total.

Defence spending by European Nato members and Canada has increased over the last 10 years.

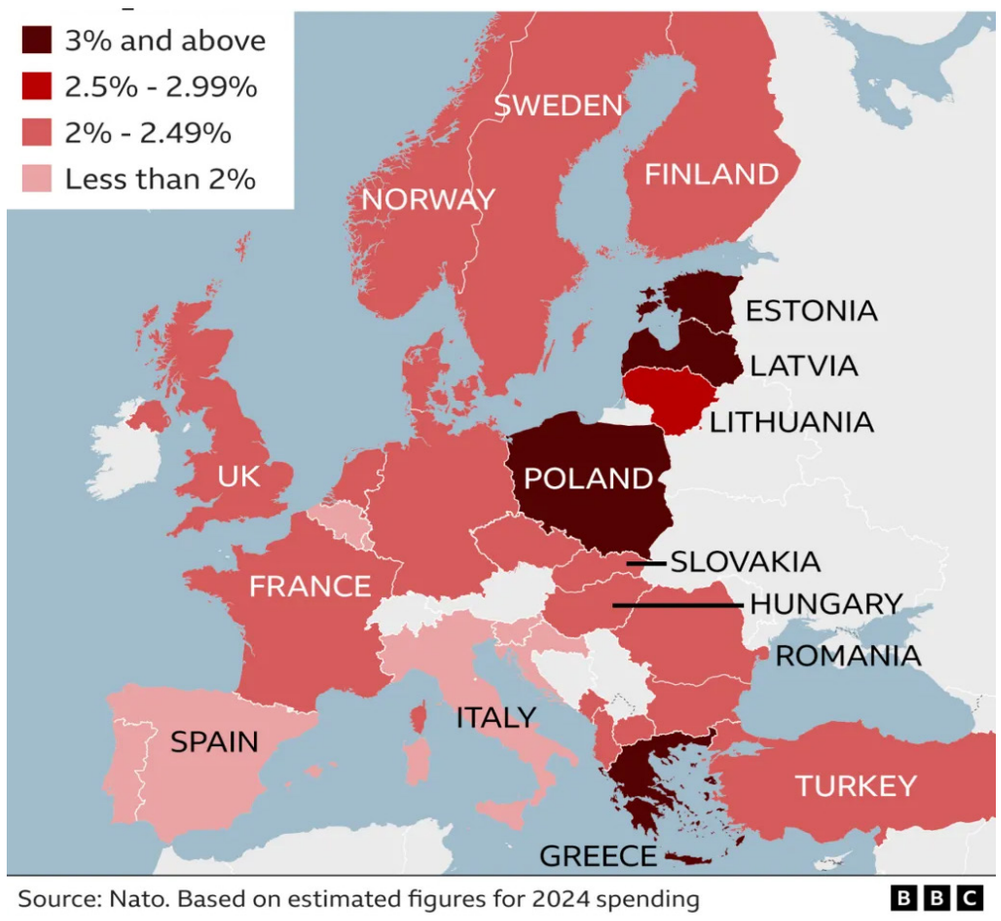
Which countries are increasing their defence budgets?

The current target for European Nato members of 2per cent of GDP on defence by 2024 was agreed in 2014.

In that year only three countries (the US, UK and Greece) were spending more than 2per cent on defence.

Chart showing defence spending by selected Nato members since 2014. The US has been the biggest spender overall. It has been overtaken by Poland as a proportion of GDP.

Nato members also pledged that by 2024 at least 20per cent of their defence expenditure should go on acquiring and developing military equipment.



Percentage of GDP spent by NATO countries on defence

PHOTO: BBC

Shashank Joshi, defence editor of The Economist told BBC News on 9 July 2024 that the reason for that target is so countries are "not just wasting it all on pensions or something that isn't directly contributing to combat power".

In 2024, all Nato members except Belgium and Canada are expected to achieve that.

What about the cost of running NATO?

Nato's annual budget and programmes come to about USD 3.8 billion overall, and there's an agreed cost-sharing formula to pay for the running of things such as: civilian staff and administrative costs of Nato headquarters, joint operations, strategic commands, radar and early warning systems, training and liaison, defence communications systems, airfields, harbours and fuel supplies The cost sharing is based on national income.

The three biggest contributors to this are the US and Germany at 16per cent and the UK at 11per cent.

The US used to pay more than 22per cent of these running costs.

But a new payment formula was agreed in 2019 to address complaints by the Trump administration about the burden to the US of supporting the alliance.

What else does the US do for NATO?

The US has about 85,000 troops based throughout Europe. Some US personnel based in Europe support non-Nato operations and US military numbers fluctuate as forces are rotated in and out of Europe.

Germany currently hosts by far the largest number of US forces in Europe, followed by Italy and the UK.

However, the biggest single overseas deployment of US personnel is not in a Nato member state at all.

It is in Japan, where the US maintains more than 50,000 troops.

Chart showing major US troop deployments. The top five countries are Japan, Germany, South Korea, Italy and the UK.

—BBC News

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڈھ

Post election, France fears rise in hate speech

President Emmanuel Macron's government is facing backlash for tightening immigration measures

PHOTO: PTI

For many French voters of diverse backgrounds, last Sunday's parliamentary election results were a relief, seemingly an embrace of the country's ethnic variety instead of a victory for xenophobic far-right forces.

"It was a moment of joy, a light at the end of the tunnel," Loven Bensimon said about the ballot results. She celebrated Sunday with thousands of others who rallied against the far right at Place de la Republique in Paris around a giant patchwork French flag that read, "France is the fabric of migrations."

"But the fight is not over," said Bensimon, 27, a Black woman who works in communications. "We have to fight against the racism we face every day, and which has been more visible in the past few weeks."

Thought to be on the verge of seizing a majority in the National Assembly, the anti-immigration National Rally eventually came in third in Sunday's vote, after centrists and leftists joined forces. Candidates in three-way races dropped out of the runoff to favour the challenger considered most likely to beat the far right.

But civil society groups and concerned citizens say the campaign has exposed racist hate speech and occasional violence that are unlikely to vanish when the new parliament takes office.

Franco-Algerian Nacera Houngues, 61, says she experienced abuse because of her origins for the first time during the campaign. The day after the first round of the elections in June, Houngues says neighbors knocked over her trash can, called her obscene epithets and spat at her during an altercation.

"I am afraid, really afraid, a feeling I never had before," Houngues said, fighting off tears.

She filed a police complaint the next day, but says she's afraid of leaving her house. She has been living in Chacrise, a quiet town north of Paris, with her five children and her Franco-Beninese husband for 37 years.

It is difficult to quantify race and ethnicity as factors in French society using statistics because the country doesn't count people by race or religion as part of its doctrine of colour-blind universalism.

It isn't known, for example, if people of foreign backgrounds came out to vote Sunday in higher-than-expected numbers, though the turnout in general was high. Polling agencies do not track voting patterns by ethnic group.

A human rights panel has, however, reported a significant increase in complaints about racist and antisemitic acts. France's National Consultative Commission on Human Rights reported a 32per cent spike in racist incidents in 2023, and an "unprecedented" surge in antisemitic acts, up 284 from 2022. The report said the numbers were likely an undercount, given that many victims of racism don't file complaints.

According to France's national statistics agency, one million people said that they were victims of racism at least once last year.

Neither agency gave a breakdown of the complainants by race or ethnicity, though the human rights panel said there has been a decrease in tolerance toward Black, Arab, Roma, Jewish and Muslim people in France.

The panel cites the National Rally as a key party in emboldening hate speech but says that other parties have contributed too, including militants close to far-left party France Unbowed, which has been accused of anti-Semitism.

A renowned Nazi hunter in France, Serge Klarsfeld, went so far as to urge voters to choose the far right party over the country's leftist coalition if faced with the choice of just those two options, saying he feared France Unbowed because of its "antisemitic overtones."

For Dominique Sopo, the head of civil society group SOS Racisme, the numbers reflect an especially tense political climate.

He said the essential message of the National Rally, which has seen a steady increase in support over the past decade, is that French people would be better off "if they strike, one way or another — symbolically, legally — immigrants and their children."

His group recently filed a complaint after residents of an upper-class neighborhood in Western Paris reported receiving anonymously distributed flyers reading "Stop the Blacks."

France's diverse population includes new immigrants and those whose foreign roots stretch back generations, including people from former French colonies in Africa. A 2022 study found that about a third of French people under 60 have an immigrant ancestor, though exact breakdowns are unknown.

Nonna Mayer, a leading expert on the National Rally, said the growth in voter support for the far right party in recent years has made people more comfortable using xenophobic and anti-Semitic language in public.

"The National Rally defends a French first' strategy that makes foreigners and immigrants scapegoats," Mayer said. "Its success favours racist acts, mostly verbal aggressions."

During the campaign, the National Rally singled out dual citizens, saying they shouldn't be given certain "strategic jobs." One of its candidates, Roger Chudeau, sparked controversy when he said on TV that it had been a "mistake" to have appointed Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, a French-Moroccan, to the position of education minister in 2014-17, saying it was "not a good thing for the Republic."

President Emmanuel Macron's centrist government has also tightened immigration measures, exacerbating anti-immigrant feeling in society, the human rights panel said.

For Jessica Saada, a 31-year-old Jewish woman of Tunisian origins working in a French pediatric hospital, racism is more palpable now than she can ever remember. She said she opposed the National Rally's proposals to ban Muslim headscarves in public or outlaw ritual slaughter, which would restrict French Muslims' and Jews' access to kosher and halal meat.

"It's just going to cause problems and bring more hate," she said.

—AP

Trump fails to woo Black voters; Biden faces pressure from 'elites'

As he prepares to accept the Republican nomination for the third time, Donald Trump has promised new efforts to expand his coalition - and, in particular, to win over more of the non-white voters who largely rejected him during the 2020 election.

But an AP analysis of two consecutive polls conducted in June by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that about seven in 10 Black Americans have a somewhat or very unfavourable view of Trump, as do about half of Hispanic Americans. While both groups do see Trump a little more favourably than when he left office in 2021, their opinion of him is still more negative than positive.

Any gains in support among Black or Hispanic Americans would be helpful for Trump, who won 35per cent of Hispanic voters and 8per cent of Black voters in 2020, according to AP VoteCast, and has struggled to grow his appeal beyond his base. He's hoping, in part, to capitalise on frustration with his opponent, since President Joe Biden's favourability among Black and Hispanic Americans has also fallen since 2021. It's not clear, though, that Biden's loss of enthusiasm among Black and Hispanic adults is helping Trump's own standing among these groups.

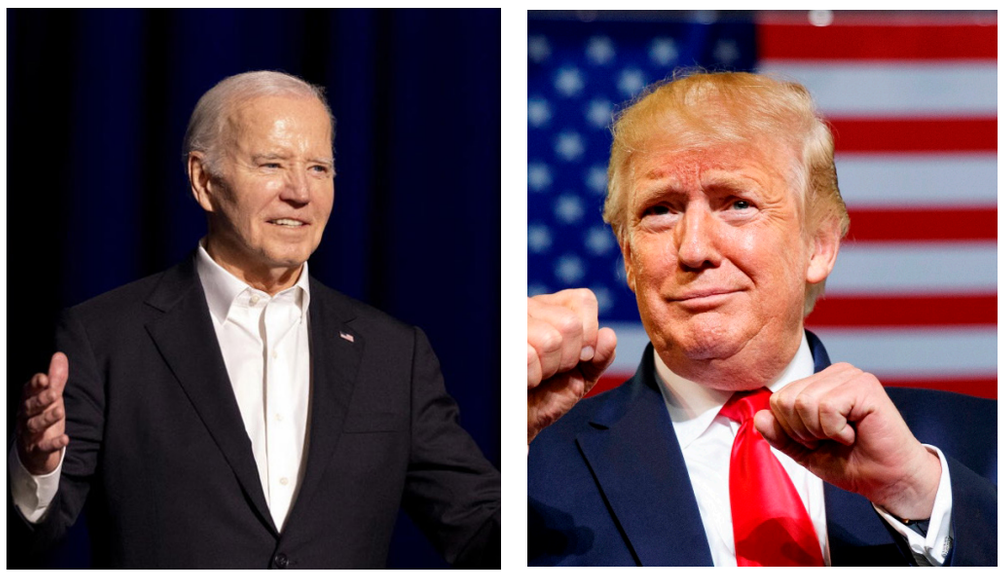
Views of Trump are stable

Most Americans have a negative view of Trump, according to the AP-NORC analysis, which combined two polls conducted close together to yield a bigger sample size. About six in 10 US adults have a very or somewhat unfavourable opinion of him, while about four in 10 have a favourable opinion. Overall views of Trump were similar in January and July 2021, too, in the months after Biden took office.

Views of Trump are generally very stable - even a felony conviction didn't change how Americans see him. After he was convicted in May of 34 felony counts in New York for falsifying business documents, polls from the AP-NORC Center found that overall views of Trump barely budged. During the Trump presidency, Gallup polls found that Trump's average job approval rating was 41per cent, and it never exceeded 50per cent.

About half of Hispanic view Trump negatively

Trump has said on the campaign trail that he has "great support" from Hispanic communities. But the AP analysis found that about half of Hispanic adults have an unfavourable view of Trump. About four in 10 Hispanic adults in the recent AP-NORC polls see Trump positively, up from about three in 10 in January 2021.



President Joe Biden's favourability among Black and Hispanic Americans has also fallen since 2021 and Donald Trump plans to capitalise on it

PHOTO: PTI

And even though Trump's campaign advisers have said he has specific appeal among Hispanic men and younger Hispanic adults because of his business focus, that's not what the poll analysis shows. Current views of Trump are similar among Hispanic men and women, older and younger Hispanic adults, and those with and without a college degree.

Biden vs 'elites'

Considering her choices in this year's rapidly approaching presidential election, Rochelle Jones thinks both major party candidates should step aside.

"They just need to get somebody that's going to run this country right, that don't have any health issues, that care about us people," the 39-year-old culinary worker at Michigan State University said this week.

As Joe Biden struggles to recover from a disastrous debate performance last month, he has argued that desires for him to leave the campaign are limited to his party's " elite." But Jones' sentiment reflects a more nuanced reality unfolding in some of the most politically competitive states, from here in Michigan to Pennsylvania and Nevada.

In interviews this week, many voters said they still support Biden. But they also expressed concern that a lack of enthusiasm for his candidacy could cause a lot of Democratic voters to stay home, handing the race to Republican Donald Trump. Some are concerned as well about the impact Biden's continued candidacy would have on down-ballot races at a time when control of the US House and Senate are also up for grabs. Although Biden has gotten some of his strongest support in recent days from Black elected officials, many Black swing state voters said they were worried. Jones, who is Black, said she will probably vote for Biden when it comes down to it but feels he needs to address inflation, a top-of-mind issue for her.

The one unifying factor for most Democrats — elites and regulars alike — is the threat of a second Trump term. Biden has long argued that voters will reject Trump when faced with a one-on-one race, whatever their reservations about the incumbent.

Anxiety among rank-and-file voters comes as Biden fends off public and private pressure for him to relinquish the Democratic nomination and allow the party to field a different candidate to take on Trump in November. House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi on Wednesday said merely "it's up to the president to decide" if he should stay in the race, Vermont Sen. Peter Welch called on Biden to withdraw from the election, becoming the first Senate Democrat to do so, and celebrity donor George Clooney also said Biden should not run.

"What I hear more so from people of color is, if not him, what's the alternative?"" said Craig Tatum, a pastor and prominent Black leader in Saginaw, Michigan. He said many people he speaks with found Biden's performance troubling but remain committed to voting Democratic after seeing Trump's presidency and character.

A demographic microcosm of Michigan at large, Saginaw County is the only Michigan bellwether to side with the winner in the last four presidential elections.

The county's namesake city, population 44,000, is about half Black, while surrounding areas are predominantly Republican.

—AP

PHOTO: X/ @LIVEUPDATESUS

Ex-Indonesian minister sentenced for corruption

JAKARTA, 11 JULY

Indonesia's anti-graft court sentenced a former agriculture minister to 10 years in prison on Thursday after finding him guilty of corruption-related extortion, abuse of power and bribery involving ministry contracts with private vendors. The case has tarnished President Joko Widodo's credibility in fighting corruption. Five other members of Widodo's Cabinet have been sentenced to prison terms in corruption cases, casting a shadow over his efforts to clean up government while his term will end in October. The court in the capital ruled that the former Cabinet minister, Syahrul Yasin Limpo, was guilty of abusing his power by enriching himself and other officials. *—AP*

Iranian court orders US to pay $6.7 billion

TEHRAN, 11 JULY

An Iranian court on Thursday ordered the US government to pay over USD 6.7 billion in compensation over a Swedish company stopping its supply of special dressings and bandages for those afflicted by a rare skin disorder after Washington imposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic. The order by the International Relations Law Court in Tehran comes after Iran last year seized a $50 million cargo of Kuwaiti crude oil for American energy firm Chevron Corp. in the Strait of Hormuz amid tensions with the West, something it later said came over the court action for those suffering from Epidermolysis bullosa. The order comes as US judges have issued rulings that call for billions of dollars to be paid by Iran over attacks linked to Tehran, as well as those detained by Iran. *—AP*

Kenyan President dismisses cabinet after protests

NAIROBI, 11 JULY

Kenyan President William Ruto on Thursday dismissed all of his Cabinet ministers and promised to form a new government that will be lean and efficient following weeks of protests over high taxes and poor governance. In a televised address, the president also dismissed the attorney general and said ministries will be run by their permanent secretaries. Ruto said he made the move after listening to the people and that he would form a broad-based government after consultations. Kenya has seen three weeks of unrest in which protesters stormed into parliament on 25 June after a finance bill that increased taxes was passed. More than 30 people died in the protests. *—AP*

Indian ship captain, crew win bravery awards

LONDON, 11 JULY

Captain Avhilash Rawat and his crew of an oil tanker have been named among the winners of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) 2024 Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea for their "extraordinary courage" shown in a Red Sea rescue mission. Rawat and his crew were declared winners by the IMO on Wednesday for the "determination and endurance" demonstrated while coordinating firefighting and damage control efforts to combat a fire that broke out after an anti-ship missile reportedly fired by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels struck their vessel 'Marlin Luanda' earlier this year. Captain Brijesh Nambiar and the crew of the Indian Navy ship INS Visakhapatnam have been conferred a Letter of Commendation for their support to the oil tanker when in distress. *—AP*

US, Canada and Finland unite to counter Russia

They will build icebreaker fleets to boost defence in Arctic

WASHINGTON, 11 JULY

The United States, Canada and Finland will work together to build up their icebreaker fleets as they look to bolster their defences in the Arctic, where Russia has been increasingly active, the White House announced on Thursday.

The pact announced at the NATO summit calls for enhanced information sharing on polar icebreaker production, allowing for workers and experts from each country to train in shipyards across all three, and promoting to allies the purchase of polar icebreakers from American, Finnish or Canadian shipyards for their own needs.

Daleep Singh, the White House deputy national security adviser for international economics, said it would reinforce to adversaries Russia and China that the US and allies will "doggedly pursue collaboration on industrial policy to increase our competitive edge."

US President Joe Biden, Finnish President Stubb and Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau at NATO Summit in Washington *PHOTO: X @POTUS*

Beijing has sought to tighten its relationship with Moscow as much of the West has tried to economically isolate Russia in the aftermath of its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

"Without this arrangement, we'd risk our adversaries developing an advantage in a specialised technology with vast geostrategic importance, which could also allow them to become the preferred supplier for countries that also have an interest in purchasing polar icebreakers," Singh said.

President Joe Biden, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Finnish President Alexander Stubb discussed the pact on the sidelines of this week's summit, which focused largely on the alliance's efforts to counter Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Meanwhile, UK Prime Minister has pledged to spend at least £3 billion every year on military support for Ukraine for "as long as is it takes" in its conflict with Russia.

—PTI

US to ship 500-pound bombs to Israel

WASHINGTON DC,11 JULY

The United States has agreed to resume shipping 500-pound bombs to Israel while continuing to hold back supplies of powerful 2,000-pound bombs over concerns that Israeli forces will use the weapons in densely populated areas of Gaza, a US official said.

The US in May paused one shipment of 900kg and 230kg bombs due to concern over the impact the weapons could have if used by Israel during its ground invasion of the southern city of Rafah, where more than one million Palestinian civilians had sought shelter.

"We've been clear that our concern has been on the end-use of the 2,000-pound bombs, particularly for Israel's Rafah campaign which they have announced they are concluding," a US official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity, on Wednesday.

On detonation, a 500-pound bomb can severely harm or kill everything or anyone within a 20 metre blast radius.

A 2,000-pound bomb has a destruction radius of 35 metres according to the Project on Defence Alternatives (PDA), which conducts defence policy research and analysis.

The US has notified Israel that it is releasing the 500-pound bombs but maintaining a hold on the larger ones, a person familiar with the matter said. In June, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Washington of withholding weapons and called on US officials to remedy the situation.

Since the start of Israel's war on Gaza in October and up to the end of June, the US had transferred at least 14,000 of the MK-84 2,000-pound bombs, 6,500 500-pound bombs, 3,000 Hellfire precision-guided air-to-ground missiles, 1,000 bunker-buster bombs, 2,600 air-dropped small-diameter bombs, and other munitions, .International scrutiny of Israel's military operation in Gaza has intensified as the Palestinian death toll from the war has exceeded 38,000, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health, and has left the coastal enclave in ruins and its population on the brink of famine amid an outbreak of disease.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

Bangladesh students protest job reservations

DHAKA, 11 JULY

Thousands of university students in Bangladesh have been staging protests against a recruitment system that they say favours children of war heroes and certain groups for high-paying government jobs.

The protesters say the system is discriminatory and they are calling for recruitment to be based on merit.

A third of posts are kept for the children of those who fought to win the country independence in 1971. Some are also reserved for women, ethnic minorities and the disabled. Critics say the system unfairly benefits the children of pro-government groups that support Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who won her fourth straight election in January.

Hasina is the daughter of Bangladesh's founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Earlier this week, students blocked roads and highways in the capital Dhaka and other major cities, bringing traffic to a halt. The protests have been called the Bangla Blockade.

Some laid logs on a railway track in the capital, disrupting train services to northern parts of the country.

Bangladesh's top court temporarily suspended the system on Wednesday, but protests are expected to continue until it is permanently removed.

The system was reinstated by a separate court just last month. It had been halted since 2018, following weeks of protests.

Government jobs are highly coveted in Bangladesh because they pay well. In total, more than half of the positions - amounting to hundreds of thousands - are reserved for certain groups.

Earlier this month, Hasina condemned the protests, saying students were "wasting their time", while adding there was "no justification for the anti-quota movement".

—BBC News

Houthis target ship crossing Bab el-Mandeb Strait

DUBAI, 11 JULY

A suspected attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a Liberian-flagged tanker in the narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait on Wednesday, as authorities acknowledged the rebels launched their longest-range attack yet on a US-flagged vessel near the Arabian Sea.

The attacks come after an unexplained pause of a week and a half. The rebels may be regrouping ahead of the arrival of a new US aircraft carrier to the region after the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower began heading home.

The Joint Maritime Information Center, which is overseen by the US Navy, identified the Liberian-flagged vessel as the Mount Fuji. The attack occurred south of Mocha, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said. The captain reported explosions off the vessel's side.

. —AP

DETECTS 3 VESSELS

US spots Chinese naval ships off Alaska Island

The crew detected three vessels approximately 200km north of the Amchitka Pass in the Aleutian Islands *PHOTO: X/@GLOBAL_VOTERS*

ANCHORAGE, 11 JULY

A US Coast Guard cutter on routine patrol in the Bering Sea came across several Chinese military ships in international waters but within the US exclusive economic zone, officials said Wednesday.

The crew detected three vessels approximately 200km north of the Amchitka Pass in the Aleutian Islands, the Coast Guard said in a statement. A short time later, a helicopter aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak spotted a fourth ship approximately 135km north of the Amukta Pass.

All four of the People's Republic of China vessels were "transiting in international waters but still inside the US Exclusive Economic Zone," which extends 200 370km from the US shoreline, the statement said.

"The Chinese naval presence operated in accordance with international rules and norms," said Rear Adm. Megan Dean, Seventeenth Coast Guard District commander. "We met presence with presence to ensure there were no disruptions to US interests in the maritime environment around Alaska."

US Coast Guard Cutter Kimball is a 418-foot (127-meter) ship based in Honolulu.

This wasn't the first time Chinese naval ships have sailed near Alaska waters. In September 2022, the Kimball spotted guided missile cruiser from China in the Bering Sea. And in Sept. 2021, Coast Guard cutters in the Bering Sea and North Pacific Ocean encountered Chinese ships, about 80km off the Aleutian Islands.

—AP

S KOREA TO DEPLOY LASER WEAPONS AGAINST N KOREA

SEOUL, 11 JULY

South Korea said Thursday it will begin deploying laser weapons systems designed to intercept North Korean drones, which have caused security concerns in the South in recent years.

South Korea's Defence Acquisition Program Administration said that it will deploy at least one anti-air laser weapons system called "Block-I" by the end of this year and more in coming years.

An agency statement said the "Block-I" system is capable of launching precision attacks on small incoming drones and multi-copters. It said the system, developed by local company Hanwha Aerospace, costs just about USD 1.50 per shot.

"We face North Korea on our doorstep and its drones pose present threats to us, so that's why we've been aiming to build and deploy laser weapons soon to cope with them," an agency official said, requesting anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to media on the issue.

He said that other countries like the United States and Israel are ahead of South Korea in laser weapons technology, but their primary focus has been on higher-powered laser guns that can shoot down incoming ballistic missiles. South Korea also hopes to develop such anti-missile laser weapons, which its defense procurement agency called "a game changer" in future combat environments.

—AP

Saudi flight catches fire at Peshawar airport

ISLAMABAD, 11 JULY

A Saudi Airlines flight from Riyadh caught fire upon landing at Pakistan's Peshawar airport on Thursday, prompting a swift evacuation of all 276 passengers and 21 crew members to safety. The plane caught fire upon landing at Peshawar's Bacha Khan International Airport, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper.

According to CAA Spokesperson Saifullah, air traffic controllers witnessed smoke and sparks emanating from the left-hand side landing gear of the aircraft as it landed and alerted the pilots. They informed the airport fire and rescue services. Reaching the scene, CAA fire vehicles were able to extinguish the flames engulfing the landing gear, the statement read. According to Peshawar airport officials, the airport is operational, and all flights will continue as per their schedules.

—PTI

PHOTO: X/@GHULAMABBASSHAH

- According to CAA Spokesperson air traffic controllers witnessed smoke and sparks emanating from the left-hand side landing gear of the aircraft

UK mulls tighter crossbow laws after triple murder

LONDON, 11 JULY

A man suspected of killing the wife and daughters of a BBC radio sports commentator with a crossbow was being treated in a hospital Thursday after being found injured in a cemetery some 22km from the scene of the crimes.

Police had spent almost a day hunting for Kyle Clifford after the attack on Carol Hunt, 61, and her daughters Hannah, 28 and Louise, 25 at their home in Bushey, northwest of London. Police and ambulance crews called to the suburban cul-de-sac on Tuesday evening tried to save them, but they were pronounced dead at the scene. After a frantic search Clifford, 26, was found Wednesday in the Enfield area of north London. Footage from Sky News showed the suspect being carried on a stretcher out of Lavender Hill Cemetery. Armed police officers and ambulance staff had massed around the cemetery through the day.

—AP

Nepal's Deuba-Oli discuss govt formation

KATHMANDU, 11 JULY

Ahead of a floor test for the embattled Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Friday, leaders of the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have agreed to form a new coalition government after ousting the former guerrilla leader.

KP Sharma Oli-led CPN-UML, the largest party in the ruling coalition, withdrew support for the Prachanda-led government last week after inking a power-sharing deal with the largest party - Nepali Congress - to replace the former Maoist leader, who is expected to lose the confidence vote.

The Nepali Congress, the largest party in the 275-member House of Representatives, has 89 seats at present, while CPN-UML has 78 seats. Their combined strength of 167 is sufficient for a majority of 138 seats in the lower house. Prachanda's party has 32 seats.

Oli, the CPN-UML chairperson, met Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba on Wednesday.

The meeting between the two leaders was aimed at formulating a future strategy on how to move forward after the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) agreed to form a new coalition government.

The two leaders discussed matters such as collecting signatures in favour of the new coalition to be led by Oli and its submission to the president.

—PTI

CONTAMINATION RISK

Cooking oil scandal rocks Chinese govt

BEIJING, 11 JULY

The Chinese government says it will investigate allegations that fuel tankers have been used to transport cooking oil after carrying toxic chemicals without being cleaned properly between loads.

The controversy has spread online as social media users express concerns about potential food contamination.

Tankers used for transporting fuel were found to be carrying food products, like cooking oil and syrup, and were not decontaminated correctly, according to state-run Beijing News.

Transporting cooking oil in contaminated fuel trucks was said to have been so widespread it was considered an "open secret" in the industry, according to one driver quoted by the newspaper.

The controversy has spread online as social media users express concerns about potential food contamination *PHOTO: PTI*

The case is the latest blow to public trust in the Chinese government's ability to enforce food safety standards.

The controversy has been the top trending topic on Chinese social media in recent days. On Weibo - the country's equivalent to X, there have been tens of thousands of posts about the scandal, which have racked up millions of views.

"Food safety is the most important issue," a comment liked more than 8,000 times said. Another comment said: "As an ordinary person, surviving in this world itself is an amazing thing already."

Many compared it to the 2008 Sanlu milk scandal, in which some 300,000 children became sick and at least six died after drinking powdered milk contaminated with high levels of the industrial chemical melamine. "This is much worse than the Sanlu scandal, it can't be settled with just [a] statement," a user commented.

In China, tankers are not limited to any particular type of goods so can, in theory, carry food products straight after transporting coal-based oils. The claims involve several major Chinese companies including a subsidiary of state-owned Sinograin and the Hopefull Grain and Oil Group.

—BBC News

Cape Town hit by storms; 4,500 displaced by floods

CAPE TOWN, 11 JULY

The South African city of Cape Town and surrounding areas were hit by more storms Thursday that ripped roofs off houses and caused widespread flooding, forcing at least 4,500 people out of their homes and damaging at least 15,000 structures, authorities said. The devastating weather began a week ago.

Multiple cold fronts have battered the region on the southwest tip of Africa since late last week, bringing record rainfall in some parts and gale-force winds. City authorities said the bad weather was expected to continue until the weekend and possibly into next week.

The Wynberg neighborhood of Cape Town was littered with damage Thursday morning after the latest front hit overnight. The strong winds blew off roofs, destroyed parts of houses and other buildings, and brought down electricity poles.

- The City of Cape Town said its Disaster Operations Centre worked through the night to respond to calls for help from residents

The City of Cape Town said its Disaster Operations Centre worked through the night to respond to calls for help from residents.

JP Smith, the Cape Town mayoral committee member for safety and security, said the city and non-governmental organizations had already provided more than 36,000 meals and distributed 6,000 blankets to affected people in the last two days.

—AP

Rupee falls 5 paise to close at 83.56 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 11 JULY

The rupee settled for the day 5 paise lower at 83.56 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a weak tone in domestic markets and a recovery in crude oil prices. Forex traders said rupee traded with a slight negative bias on profit booking in the domestic market, which may result in foreign fund outflows. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.49, but lost ground and touched an intraday low of 83.59 against the American currency during the session.

It finally settled at 83.56 (provisional) against the dollar, 5 paisa lower than its previous close.On Wednesday, the rupee stayed rangebound and settled 2 paise lower at 83.51 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.16 per cent lower at 104.87. *—PTI*

Gold price rises on jewellers' buying, positive trend

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Gold price rose Rs 50 to Rs 75,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday driven by jewellers' buying and a firm trend in the international markets, according to All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had settled at Rs 75,050 per 10g on Wednesday. Silver prices also climbed by Rs 100 to Rs 94,500 per kg. It had closed at Rs 94,400 per kg in the previous session. In sarafa markets, the yellow metal was trading at Rs 75,100 per 10g, up by Rs 50 against the previous close, the association said. Traders said gold rallied due to fresh demand from local jewellers and a firm trend in overseas markets.*—PTI*

Labour panel writes to WB over assault on jute staffers

KOLKATA, 11 JULY

The Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA) has written to West Bengal Labour Minister Moloy Ghatak, expressing grave concern over incidents of "violent assault on management personnel and unlawful strikes" at member mills. In the recent letter, IJMA highlighted the issue of worker indiscipline and "attempts by the management to ensure discipline and enhance productivity being repeatedly opposed by a section of workers with the help of trade union representatives". The letter said there was a violent assault on management personnel and unlawful strikes at Alliance Mills (Lessees) Ltd recently. The association stated that these incidents have "created an atmosphere of panic and uncertainty amongst the managerial and supervisory personnel of the mills," leading to a reluctance among them to attend to their duties. This has resulted in a significant decline in production and productivity in the affected jute mills. *—PTI*

Gas exploration, oil offers $100B opportunity: Govt

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday called for stepping up oil and gas hunt to cut India's reliance on imports and making available fuel at an affordable and sustainable way. Speaking at the Urja Varta conference, he said the exploration and production (E&P) sector is integral in the journey towards energy self-sufficiency, which is critical for sustained economic growth. "E&P offers investment opportunities worth USD 100 billion by 2030," he said. Stating that India's exploration and production potential still lies untapped, he said, "I find it strange that India is so heavily reliant on oil imports despite the abundant geological resources available to us." The Indian sedimentary basins hold about 651.8 million tonnes of crude oil and 1138.6 billion cubic meters of natural gas, he said. Puri said only 10 per cent of our sedimentary basin area is under exploration, which will rise to 16 per cent by 2024-end after the current bid ends. *—PTI*

Modi meets economists ahead of Budget, seeks suggestions

Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Budget in LS on 23 July

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is meeting eminent economists to elicit their views and suggestions for the upcoming Budget, a senior government official said.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Budget for 2024-25 in the Lok Sabha on 23 July.

Besides economists and sectoral experts, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery and other members also attended the meeting.

Finance Minister Sitharaman, Planning Minister Rao Inderjit Singh, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran and economists Surjit Bhalla and Ashok Gulati and veteran banker K V Kamath among others were present in the meeting.

The Budget for 2024-25 will be the first major economic document of the Modi 3.0 government, which, among other things, is expected to lay the road map for making India a developed nation by 2047.

President Droupadi Murmu, in her address to the joint sitting of Parliament last month, had indicated that the government would come out with historic steps to accelerate the pace of reforms.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during a meeting with economists at NITI Aayog, in New Delhi on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is meeting eminent economists to elicit their views and suggestions for the upcoming Budget, a senior government official said.

She also said the Budget will be an effective document of the government's far-reaching policies and futuristic vision.

Sitharaman has already held discussions with various stakeholders, including economists and captains of Indian industry, on the forthcoming Budget.

Several experts have urged the government to provide tax relief to the common man to boost consumption and take steps to check inflation and accelerate economic growth.

The economy has recorded a growth rate of 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.

Earlier in February, Sitharaman presented an interim budget for 2024-25 in view of the Lok Sabha elections. *—PTI*

SENSEX TOUCHES 79,897.34

Market settles marginally down on profit-taking

MUMBAI, 11 JULY

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty closed marginally down in a volatile session on Thursday as investors booked profits in heavyweights ahead of the announcement of key financial results for the June quarter.

Retreating from early highs, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed lower by 27.43 points or 0.03 per cent at 79,897.34. The index climbed 245.32 points to hit a high of 80,170.09 in early trade but later lost momentum due to selling in index heavyweights. The barometer hit a day's low of 79,464.38, down by 460.39 points from the last close.

The NSE Nifty edged down 8.50 points or 0.03 per cent to settle at 24,315.95. The broader index gyrated between a high of 24,402.65 and a low of 24,193.75 in day trade.

"The main indices are trading in a narrow range, struggling to justify its premium valuation ahead of the Q1 earnings season, which is forecast to be subdued," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Among Sensex shares, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Nestle, NTPC, Power Grid, NTPC, UltraTech Cement and Larsen & Toubro were the biggest laggards.

The prominent gainers were ITC, Tata Motors, Asian Paints and Titan.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher. European markets were trading in positive territory. US markets ended significantly higher on Wednesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 583.96 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. *—PTI*

DIRECTORS APPROVE PLAN

Vedanta plans to raise over ₹1,000 crore via debentures

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Mining conglomerate Vedanta Ltd on Thursday said it plans to raise up to Rs 1,000 crore through the issuance of debentures.

In a regulatory filing the company said, its directors have approved the allotment of 1,00,000 non-convertible debentures aggregating to Rs 1,000 crore on a private placement basis.

"The duly constituted committee of directors of the company has approved the allotment of 1,00,000 secured, rated, listed, redeemable, non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of face value Rs 1,00,000 each aggregating to Rs 1,000 crore on a private placement basis," the filing said.

PHOTO: PTI

Vedanta Ltd, a subsidiary of Vedanta Resources Ltd, is one of the world's leading natural resources companies.

Spanning across India, South Africa, Namibia, Liberia, UAE, Korea, Taiwan and Japan with significant operations in oil and gas, zinc, lead, silver, copper, iron ore, steel, nickel, aluminium, power and glass substrate and foraying into semiconductors and display glass. *—PTI*

Fin Min notifies GSTR-1A forms

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The Finance Ministry has notified the GSTR-1A form, which will give an option to taxpayers to amend outward supply or sales return form.

Last month, the GST Council had recommended providing a new optional facility by way of form GSTR-1A to facilitate the taxpayers to amend the details in form GSTR-1 for a tax period and/ or to declare additional details.

GSTR-1A will, however, have to be filed before filing of return in GSTR-3B for the said tax period.

The finance ministry on 10 July notified the GSTR-1A form.

- The Finance Ministry has notified the GSTR-1A form which will give an option to taxpayers to amend outward supply or sales return form.

This amendment not only minimises the risk of penalties and interest due to incorrect filings but also significantly reduces the compliance burden, underscoring the CBIC's commitment to a more responsive and taxpayer-friendly GST regime.

This will facilitate taxpayer to add any particulars of supply of the current tax period missed out in reporting in form GSTR-1 of the said tax period or to amend any particulars already declared in GSTR-1 of the current tax period (including those declared in Invoice Furnishing Facility (IFF), for the first and second months of a quarter, if any, for quarterly taxpayers), to ensure that correct liability is auto-populated in GSTR-3B.

Currently, GST taxpayers file outward supply return GSTR-1 by the 11th day of the subsequent month, GSTR-3B is filed in a staggered manner between 20th-24th day of the succeeding month.

Taxpayers with annual turnover of up to Rs 5 crore can file GSTR-1 quarterly within 13th day of the end of the quarter, while GSTR-3B is filed between 22nd and 24th day of the succeeding month. *—PTI*

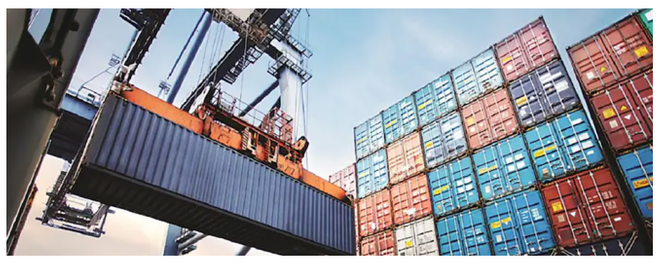
UK to review duties on Indian PET plastics

LONDON, 11 JULY

The UK's Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) initiated a transition anti-subsidy review of a countervailing measure on imports of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastics from India, to assess whether the nearly 13 per cent duties should continue to be applied.

It will also consider whether injury to the UK industry in the relevant goods would be likely to continue or recur if the countervailing amount were no longer applied to those goods.

Countervailing measures are the UK's one of three trade policy tools to counter imports which are "causing or threatening injury" to domestic industry, the other two being anti-dumping and safeguard measures.



Countervailing measures are the UK's one of three trade policy tools *PHOTO: PTI*

Countervailing, or counteracting, measures address imported goods which are being subsidised by foreign governments.

"PET is a type of plastic that is used to produce beverage bottles, make packaging for food products, and is used in textiles like clothing fabrics. In 2023, total imports of PET were worth over GBP 200 million," notes the TRA.

"The TRA will be reviewing this measure, which was inherited from the EU, to determine whether it is still suitable for the UK's needs. The current duties applied to PET from India range from 0 per cent to 13.8 per cent. *—PTI*

Kalpataru bags Rs 2,995 cr orders

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Kalpataru Projects International on Thursday said the company along with its joint ventures and international subsidiaries have bagged orders worth Rs 2,995 crore.

In a statement the company said the new order wins were in the transmission & distribution (T&D), building & factories (B&F) and water business categories.

Kalpataru Projects International Limited (KPIL) along with its joint ventures and international subsidiaries have secured new orders/notification of awards of Rs 2,995 crore, the statement said. *—PTI*

TCS' net profit for the year-ago period stood at Rs 11,074 crore *PHOTO: PTI*

TCS net profit rises 8.7 pc to ₹12,040 crore in Q1

MUMBAI, 11 JULY

India's largest IT services company Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Thursday posted an 8.7 per cent year-on-year rise in its consolidated net profit at Rs 12,040 crore in the first quarter ended June 2024.

The net profit for the year-ago period stood at Rs 11,074 crore.

The company - which competes in the IT services market with the likes of Infosys, Wipro and HCLTech - reported a 5.4 per cent increase in its revenue at Rs 62,613 crore for the quarter just ended.

Sequentially, however, the net profit fell 3.1 per cent compared to March quarter.

The company is continuing to expand its client relationships, create new capabilities in emerging technologies and invest in innovation, including a new AI-focused TCS PacePort in France, IoT lab in the US, and expanding delivery centres in Latin America, Canada and Europe, Krithivasan added.

Samir Seksaria, Chief Financial Officer, noted that despite the usual impact of the annual wage increments in this quarter, the company delivered strong operating margin performance validating its efforts towards operational excellence. *—PTI*

Housing sales dip 6% in April-June to 1.14 lakh units

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

THousing sales across the top eight cities declined 6 per cent in the April-June period compared with the preceding quarter as builders and investors were cautious due to Lok Sabha polls, according to PropTiger.

Property brokerage platform PropTiger, which is part of REA India that owns Housing.com, on Thursday released its quarterly data on housing demand and supply.

As per the data, housing sales fell 6 per cent to 1,13,768 units during the April-June period from 120,642 units in the preceding January-March quarter.

However, the housing sales rose 42 per cent in April-June from 80,245 units in the year-ago period.

As per the quarter-on-quarter data, the housing sales in Ahmedabad fell 26 per cent to 9,500 units in April-June from 12,915 units during January-March this year.

Bengaluru, however, saw a 30 per cent increase in sales to 13,495 units from 10,381 units.

Sales of residential properties in Chennai dipped 10 per cent to 3,984 units from 4,427 units.

Delhi-NCR witnessed an increase of 10 per cent in sales to 11,065 units from 10,058 units.

Housing sales in Hyderabad fell 14 per cent to 12,296 units from 14,298 units. *—PTI*

Govt to launch 125 fisheries projects worth ₹100cr in TN

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

In a major boost to the fisheries sector, Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh is slated to inaugurate more than 125 projects at the Fisheries Summer Meet to be held in Madurai, Tamil Nadu on Friday, according to ministry officials.

These initiatives, approved under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), represent a total investment exceeding Rs 100 crore.

The ministry officials said the diverse array of initiatives includes fish retail kiosks, shrimp hatcheries, brood banks, ornamental fish units, biofloc units, fish feed mills, and fish value-added enterprises. PMMSY, a flagship programme of the Centre, aims to foster sustainable development in the fisheries sector. While details of specific financial assistance were not disclosed, the scheme is expected to significantly bolster local businesses and enhance the country's fisheries output.

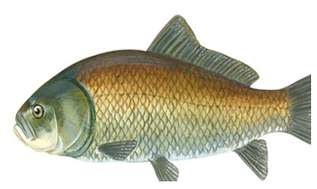


PHOTO: PTI

The event will also see Singh distribute grants to 12 winners of the inaugural Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge, organised by the ministry. *—PTI*

TRACKS SLEEP, PERIODS

In a 1st, Samsung launches smart ring

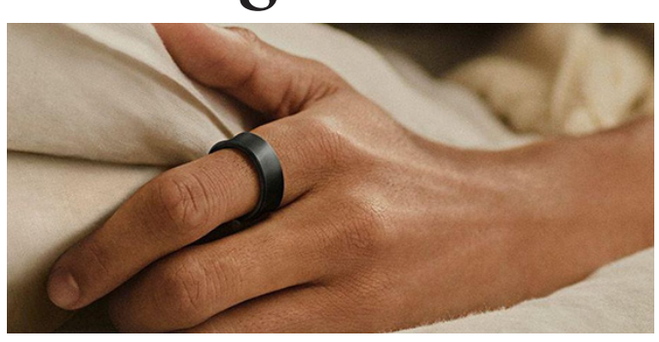
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Samsung is hoping to lure fitness and health-tracking technology lovers with its newest wearable device - the Galaxy Ring.

It launched the device at its Galaxy Unpacked event on Wednesday as the latest addition to its ecosystem of devices it says it is "supercharging" with artificial intelligence (AI).

Pre-orders for the Galaxy Ring begin on 10 July in select markets, with general availability starting on 24 July. It is available in three sleek colours—Titanium Black, Titanium Silver, and Titanium Gold—and comes in nine different sizes to ensure a perfect fit.

Smart rings, which use tiny sensors to monitor various health metrics, have up to now been a niche product - though their recent use by the England men's football team made headlines.



In recent years, the rings have become a fitness tech fashion staple for celebrities *PHOTO: BBC*

It seems Samsung is attempting to change that, becoming the largest tech company yet to enter the smart ring market.

Ben Wood, analyst at CCS Insight, says the product choice is an "interesting bet" for Samsung, with his company estimating that there will be a total global market of around four million smart rings in 2025.

"That is a rounding error when compared with 250 million smartwatches that are also expected to be sold," he told the BBC.

But others suggest Samsung may help make smart rings more mainstream.

Smart rings can track health indicators such as your heart rate, sleep and menstrual cycle. The market is currently dominated by Finnish health tech firm, Oura.

In recent years the rings have become a fitness tech fashion staple for celebrities such as Kim Kardashian. *—BBC News*

EURO 2024

With late goal fit for a king, England reaches Euro final

Southgate savours semifinal win after criticism

DORTMUND, 12 JULY

England is into another European Championship final after its latest dramatic, come-from-behind win that even took King Charles III on a roller coaster ride.

Ollie Watkins, who came on for captain Harry Kane in a bold call by England coach Gareth Southgate, scored in the first minute of stoppage time to earn England a 2-1 win over the Netherlands on Wednesday and a shot at Spain in the title match.

In the knockout stage at Euro 2024, England scored a stoppage-time equalizer through Jude Bellingham before edging past Slovakia in the last 16 and needed a penalty shootout to see off Switzerland in the quarterfinals.

The English are keeping their supporters back home on the edge of their seats as the men's team moves closer to a first title since the 1966 World Cup and that includes its monarch.

"If I may encourage you to secure victory before the need for any last-minute goals or another penalties drama, I am sure the stresses on the nation's collective heart rate and blood pressure would be greatly alleviated!" the king said in a congratulatory message soon after the game in Dortmund.

Watkins' goal was fit for a king.

England players celebrate at the end of a semifinal match between the Netherlands and England at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Dortmund, Germany **PHOTO: PTI**

He had only made one previous appearance at Euro 2024 as a substitute in the group game against Denmark so it was a surprise when he was introduced by Southgate in the 80th minute in England's biggest match so far.

The gamble paid off.

Fed by another substitute in Cole Palmer, Watkins took a touch with his back to goal just inside the area and, from a tight angle, smashed a fierce shot into the bottom corner.

"Unbelievable I've been waiting for that moment for weeks," said Watkins, the Aston Villa striker who was

Gareth Southgate **PHOTO: PTI**

the fourth-equal top scorer in the Premier League last season. "It's taken a lot of hard work to get to where I am today. I got the opportunity and took it with both hands."

It was painful for Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman.

Gareth Southgate has faced non-stop criticism as England's manager at Euro 2024. Reaching the final could rekindle a love affair with the team's supporters.

A coach once idolized by his team's fans and with the most consistently successful record of any England manager had been the target of a volley of plastic cups from disgruntled fans at one game, and criticism from British TV commentators over his cautious approach. *—PTI*

Colombia's Kevin Castano (5) celebrates defeating Uruguay in a Copa America semifinal soccer match in Charlotte **PHOTO: PTI**

Colombia beat Uruguay and will face Argentina in Copa final

CHARLOTTE, 11 JULY

Colombia is headed to the Copa America championship game for the first time in 23 years after a contentious win over Uruguay in which it played the second half a man short and players brawled with fans in the stands following the final whistle.

Jefferson Lerma scored in the 39th minute for a 1-0 win Wednesday night and a matchup with Lionel Messi and defending champion Argentina on Sunday.

"Until you overcome your weaknesses you cannot grow," Colombia coach Nester Lorenzo said through an interpreter. "And when you overcome those obstacles you can grow." Daniel Muñoz was ejected in first-half stoppage time for an elbow that led to his second yellow card. Despite Uruguay having 61.9% possession, Colombia held on to reach the championship for the first time since winning its only Copa title as host in 2001.

Colombia extended its unbeaten streak to a team record 28 games, one more than from 1992-94 and the longest current streak in men's international soccer.

"They are very hungry as players and very eager and they add many elements to their game beyond the tactical side," Lorenzo said.

In a match that included seven yellow cards in addition to the red, players from both teams pushed and shoved in a scrum on the field at the final whistle. Darwin Núñez and about a dozen Uruguay teammates went into the stands as fans brawled. A video showed Núñez hitting a fan in Colombian team colors. Defending champion Argentina and Colombia meet at Miami Gardens, Florida, in the tournament finale. The Albiceleste are seeking a record 16th Copa title and are looking to join Spain from 2008-12. *—PTI*

Uruguayan players brawl with Colombia fans

CHARLOTTE, 11 JULY

Darwin Núnez and about a dozen Uruguay teammates went into the stands as fans brawled at Bank of America Stadium following a 1-0 loss to Colombia in a Copa America semifinal on Wednesday night. After a physical and contentious match, a melee broke out behind the Uruguay bench after Mexican referee César Ramos' final whistle. The crowd of 70,644 was about 90% in favor in Colombia, but a small patch of Uruguay fans fought with Colombia supporters as beverages were thrown.

Eng vs WI: Gus Atkinson makes dream debut

LORD'S, 11 JULY

They came for James Anderson, but they got Gus Atkinson. The first Test of England's summer at Lord's was meant to be a farewell for their greatest-ever seam bowler, but West Indies' batters rolled out the red carpet for a debutant instead: they collapsed from 88 for 3 to 121 all out, with Atkinson taking remarkable figures of 7 for 45. Atkinson took two wickets in his first 14 balls on the first morning, but it was his second spell that sent West Indies into a tailspin. He took three wickets in four balls in his ninth over, ripping the heart out of West Indies' middle order, then took two in three during his 11th. His figures were the second-best by an England bowler on their Test debut, behind only Dominic Cork. *—Agencies*

McIlroy trying to move on from US Open loss

NORTH BERWICK, 11 JULY

Rory McIlroy got back into his little world a few days too late. The immediate aftermath of a U.S. Open he threw away missing two putts in the 3-foot range included a previously planned trip to Manhattan. McIlroy said he walked the High Line a couple of times, able to be a face in the crowd of America's busiest city. "Alone with my thoughts for a couple of days, which was good," McIlroy said Wednesday at the Genesis Scottish Open, his first time back from a most devastating loss at Pinehurst No. 2. *—PTI*

Basketball: Derrick replaces Kawhi in US Olympic

LAS VEGAS, 11 JULY

USA Basketball intended to bring Kawhi Leonard to the Paris Olympics. After watching him play in a four-day training camp, they and the Los Angeles Clippers realized that the plan needed to change. Derrick White of the NBA champion Boston Celtics is replacing Leonard on the U.S. team for the Paris, the first shakeup to a roster that was announced in the spring. The decision was made Tuesday, White accepted the invitation Tuesday night and USA Basketball announced the move Wednesday morning. *—PTI*

India will not travel to Pak for Champions Trophy

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The Indian team will not travel to Pakistan for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 and will ask the International Cricket Council to hold its matches in Sri Lanka or Dubai, a BCCI source told ANI.

The ICC Champions Trophy will be held next year from February to March 2025 in Pakistan. Since 2008's Asia Cup, India has not played any cricket tournaments in Pakistan due to tense relationships between both nations.

A bilateral series from December 2012 to January 2013 in India also marked the final bilateral series between the two nations. Since then, both nations have only clashed at ICC tournaments and the Asia Cup.

Uncertainty has been looming over India's participation in the upcoming event due to the relationship between the two countries.

The Pakistan Cricket Board had proposed to India to play all its matches in one city. ESPNcricinfo had reported that Lahore was chosen as the location where India would play all of their matches. However, the Indian board is not interested in the prospect of travelling to Pakistan.

While addressing India's participation in the BCCI source, told ANI, "India will not travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy 2025. Will tell ICC to hold its matches in Dubai or Sri Lanka."

BCCI Vice-President Rajeev Shukla, in May, said that the Indian team would be sent to Pakistan for the tournament only if the central government permits it.

PHOTO: PTI

Speaking to the ANI, Shukla said, "In the case of the Champion Trophy, we will do whatever the Government of India will tell us to do. We send our team only when the Government of India permits us. So we will go according to the decision of the Indian government." A similar situation unfolded during last year's Asia Cup, which was scheduled to be hosted in Pakistan.

However, PCB was compelled to use a hybrid strategy when hosting the Asia Cup last year, with all of India's matches--including those against Pakistan--taking place in Sri Lanka.

The tournament final, which India won, took place in Colombo. Although Pakistan had hinted at the possibility of using a hybrid approach to participate in the ODI World Cup in India the previous year, it was never given any thought. Pakistan are the defending champions of the Champions Trophy, last held in 2017. *—PTI*

WIMBLEDON'S SEMIS

Alcaraz faces Daniil; Djokovic plays Musetti

LONDON, 11 JULY

Carlos Alcaraz's ability to hit any type of shot, from any position on the court, on any surface, keeps fans on the edge of their seats.

Alcaraz delights in all of that — he loves putting on a show just as much as he enjoys knowing he makes the guys on the other side of the net uncomfortable — and figures it can only help him in the Wimbledon semifinals against Daniil Medvedev on Friday.

It's beneficial, Alcaraz said, that opponents need to focus on whether he'll be "able to be back (in) the point or ... able to hit an unbelievable shot." "For me," he said, "it's great that they're thinking about it."

Alcaraz, the No. 3 seed, is seeking a second consecutive trophy at the All England Club and fourth Grand Slam title overall. His triumph last month at the French Open

Carlos Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev **PHOTO: PTI**

made him, at 21, the youngest man to collect a major trophy on hard, grass and clay courts.

Medvedev, who is seeded No. 5 and defeated No. 1 Jannik Sinner in the quarterfinals, won the 2021 U.S. Open but is just 1-5 in major finals. The other match Friday will be No. 2 Novak Djokovic, who has won seven of his men's-record 24 Slam championships at Wimbledon, against No. 25 Lorenzo Musetti, making his debut in a major semifinal.

"Against him, you are probably more stressed, because he's probably the best player ever — or one of the best players ever," said the 22-year-old Musetti, who beat Taylor Fritz in five sets on Wednesday, while Djokovic got the day off because his foe, Alex de Minaur, withdrew with an injured hip.

"You walk on court with a different mentality," said Musetti, whose 1-5 record against Djokovic includes a five-set loss at this year's French Open that ended at after 3 a.m. "If I play in a certain way, I could have my shot in the next round."

Alcaraz vs. Medvedev is a rematch from last year's semifinals, when Alcaraz won in straight sets before getting past Djokovic in the final. It also offers a contrast between a talented attacker (Alcaraz) and a consummate defender (Medvedev). *—PTI*

Indian Racing Festival: Ganguly buys Kolkata Royal Tigers

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was on Thursday unveiled as the owner of the Kolkata Royal Tigers ahead of the Indian Racing Festival 2024, scheduled between August and September this year. Apart from the debutant Kolkata racing team, the event will see participation from seven other outfits based at Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Kochi, and Ahmedabad.

The racing festival encompasses two main championships -- Indian Racing League

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly **PHOTO: PTI**

(IRL) and the Formula 4 Indian Championship (F4IC). Expressing his enthusiasm for the association, Ganguly, the former BCCI president said: "I am truly excited to embark on this journey with the Kolkata team in the Indian Racing Festival. "Motorsports has always been a passion of mine and together with the Kolkata Royal Tigers, we aim to build a strong legacy in the Indian Racing Festival and inspire a new generation of motorsport enthusiasts." Akhilesh Reddy, Chairman and Managing Director of Racing Promotions Pvt Ltd (RPPL), welcomed Ganguly to the racing fold.

"We are thrilled to announce Ganguly as the owner of the Kolkata franchise. His visionary leadership and commitment to excellence, shaped by years of legendary cricketing success, brings unparalleled dynamism to the Indian Racing Festival," he said. *—PTI*

PARIS OLYMPICS

Sindhu's smash speed, Jena's throws celebrated

MUMBAI, 11 JULY

Ace badminton player PV Sindhu, javelin thrower Kishore Jena and hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh are some of the athletes whose feats are being celebrated in the city in leadup to the Paris Olympics, starting 26 July.

An outdoor campaign was launched here on Thursday to celebrate the 'champions of the game' by sports goods manufacturing company Puma, which has partnered with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) as their official footwear partner for the Olympics. A total of 45 Indian athletes bound for the Olympics will represent the German company, whose 'See the Game Like We Do' campaign aims to celebrate the feats of the sportspersons here. "(The) double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu's powerful smash, Olympic bronze

PV Sindhu and Kishore Jena

PHOTO: PTI

medallist and hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh's ability to stop the fastest balls with ease with a series of larger-than-life outdoor spectacles across Mumbai, as it shows Asian Games medalist Kishore Jena's throw, equivalent to the height of a skyscraper," Puma said in a release.

"Sindhu's speed of a smash at 349 kmph is 3x the speed of Mumbai's iconic Central Line route. Her exemplary achievement is visualised across the coaches with imagery splashed across coaches of the local train on this route," it added.

Paris could be my last Olympics: Manpreet

He has no plans to retire anytime soon but former Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh very well knows that the Paris Games will be his fourth and last Olympics, and wants to give his best one last time at the world's biggest sporting extravaganza.

Manpreet, 32, was the captain of the Indian team that broke a 41-year-old Olympic medal drought in Tokyo by bagging the bronze.

Besides, he has been a member of the team that won 2014 and 2022 Asian Games gold medals.

"I never thought that I would be able to play four Olympics. It is every player's dream to play in the Olympics and win medals.

I consider myself very lucky that this is my fourth Olympics," Manpreet told PTI Bhasha.

"I am going to Paris thinking as if it is my last Olympics and I have to give my best. I haven't thought about quitting the game yet and my complete focus is on the Paris Games." *—PTI*

Masood to continue as Pakistan Test captain

LAHORE, 11 JULY

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and coach Jason Gillespie have reposed faith in Shan Masood to continue as the national team's Test captain ahead of a packed international season, but a decision on the leadership role of Babar Azam in white-ball formats has been put on hold.

Pakistan is scheduled to host England in a three-match Test series in October this year, while rubbers against Bangladesh, South Africa, and the West Indies are also on the calendar.The PCB held a meeting here on Wednesday, which was attended by senior board officials, national selectors, Gillespie, white ball formats coach Gary Kirsten, and assistant coach Azhar Mahmood, to discuss Pakistan's meek outing in the recent T20 World Cup in the Americas.

Shan Masood **PHOTO: PTI**

"The meeting was held to discuss ways to move forward with a comprehensive blueprint for the national team in red and white ball formats," indicated a source aware of the developments.

Masood, who took over as Test captain ahead of the tour to Australia earlier this year, received a complete vote of confidence. *—PTI*